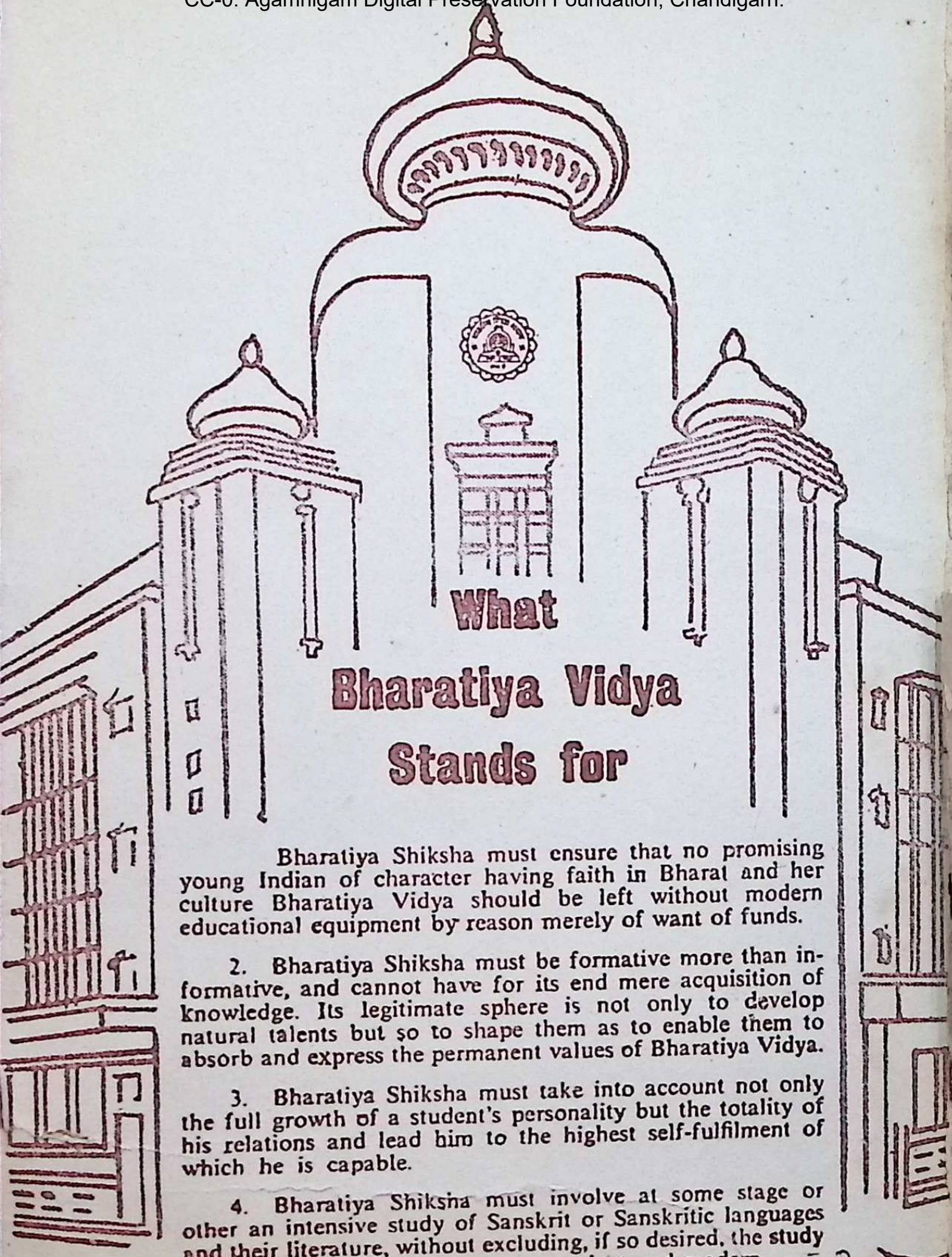
BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

J. M. Shelat

Akbar

Volume II

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY-



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Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

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7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

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(b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, I-89-i

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

General Editors

K. M. MUNSHI

R. R. DIWAKAR

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AKBAR

Volume II

BY

J. M. SHELAT

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once. Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages and was to be priced at Rs. 2.50.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages; Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit :

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities ; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the framework of the Moral Order ; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata*, summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari; the second work is on a section of it, the *Gita*, by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata*: "What is not in it, is nowhere." After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women, and of some who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita*, which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

1, Queen Victoria Road
New Delhi.
3rd October, 1951.

K. M. MUNSHI

FOREWORD

Akbar's life has been a fascinating theme for historians and biographers and therefore very difficult to view objectively. In this volume the author has presented a very balanced and authoritative appraisal of the personality and achievements of one of the greatest men in history.

The son of a foreigner who had lost all but a fragment of his grandfather's conquests, Akbar succeeded to a precarious hold over a small territory in India and to the all but notional leadership of restive and turbulent Mongol Khans. But, even in his teens, the boy developed a mature grasp over situations and an unerring sense of power. He got rid of his all-powerful guardian protector. He balanced his Mongol chieftains by Persian diplomats. He gave up Kabul which his followers loved and got them to settle in India as their native land.

Akbar was great as a diplomat. He knew when to shift his favours to keep recalcitrant chieftains in control and when to crush revolt and when to forgive a rebel. Akbar was great as a conqueror and knew when to be ruthless and when magnanimous. He was a great judge of human nature and knew how to evoke loyalty. He was great as an administrator, for he it was who converted a military raiding camp which was the Sultanate of Delhi into a well-organised empire which survived over two hundred years in spite of the narrow-mindedness or feebleness of those who succeeded him.

One of the marvellous gifts of Akbar—which we find in no other great monarch in history—was the ability to rise above the partisan intrigues of the court; to outgrow the ideas and traditions of his time; and to keep his efforts bent on the goal of establishing a non-religious, non-communal centre of power based on a just balance of forces. As a result, with statesmanship impossible in the 16th century and rare at all times, this foreign conqueror began to lay the foundations of a national monarchy for India over a people alien in race, religion and culture. The author traces this process with meticulous care : how the Rajputs were won over; how they came to counterweigh the powerful Muslims at his court; how, outgrowing sectarianism, he brought proud Hindu princesses as members of his family and left them to follow their own religion; how he lifted the terrible pressure of persecution which the Sultans had exercised over the Hindus; how he developed a non-denominational outlook which made the religious leaders of the Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and Christians as honoured in his day as the religious leaders of Islam; how he frankly adopted non-Islamic ways whenever he found them militating against his cherished dream of a united Hindustan.

The author has thus brought out in strong relief the steps by which Akbar made the Hindus feel that he was of them as much as he was of the Mongol, the Afghan, the Persian and the Turk. The Hindus in the north India, for the first time in four hundred years, felt that they were no longer the hunted of a ruthless military power. Mathura, Vrindavan and Gokul, the targets of venomous fanaticism, began to breathe freely. Hindu religious leaders came into their own. In effect, Akbar created the conditions in which the Bhakti Renaissance, with which the names of Chaitanya, Vallabha, Surdas and Tulsidas are associated, swept the country, bringing a new awakening and vitality to the culture of the land.

In this book, the author has done justice to Rana Sanga, to Hemu Vikramaditya and Udaising, the father of Pratap—all of whom heroically fought the foreign invasion of the Moghuls and to whom historians, hypnotised by the splendour of Akbar's later achievements, have scarcely been fair. And to Pratap—the Prometheus who hurled defiance at the mighty Jove—he has devoted an exceedingly well-written chapter. For Pratap represents the elemental spirit of India which resists and yet resists till it overcomes the onrush of alien influences and which accounts for her survival in time, in spite of the recurring vicissitudes through which she passed.

I congratulate the author on this book and I trust it will be a very useful addition to the Book University.

Bombay.
15-2-1959

K. M. MUNSHI

INTRODUCTION

There are various facets of Akbar's personality which at once engross the attention of a student of his life. As a ruler, a captain of war, architect of an empire, a social reformer, a lover of literature and patron of fine arts, he has left his impress on history. There is hardly any aspect of human life which his restless mind leaves untouched. Just as his powerful person would not rest until he has dominated over all his neighbours, his equally powerful mind does not rest until it has subdued problems—be they political, religious, social or administrative.

Wherever Akbar finds injustice, he gets ready to remedy it, regardless of whether such injustice is perpetrated in his own community or outside it. The paradox of history is that to a king, whose sense of justice was the keenest, justice has hardly been meted out. It was this feeling that led me to write this book.

This work may not be an adequate survey of all the versatile activities of Akbar. In fact it is not intended to be an exhaustive study of all the numerous events, policies and movements which took place during his reign of nearly half a century. It is certainly not a chronological catalogue of events. My main purpose has been to delineate the picture of the man.

It is not possible in this brief survey to give a full picture in all its dimensions of the Renaissance that ripened during Akbar's time. The forces that led to this movement had already set in even before the advent of Akbar but a strong personality was needed to hasten its pace, to counteract the forces of reaction that would have marred its maturity and to canalise it in the right direction. Akbar supplied his full vigorous force to this movement and credit must go to him as its ablest architect. That is how I see him and that is how I have endeavoured to draw him.

I confess that almost everything in this book has been written elsewhere though I believe in a somewhat different way. Nevertheless I believe I have given a new colour, a different shade, some fresh provocation to raise a fertile thought and a new flavour.

I have tried to be as detached as possible in my treatment of Akbar. But I do not believe in history being a science of mere data or a mechanical narration of events. After all, history is made by human beings either individually or collectively and dealt with by human beings. This work may not therefore have altogether escaped my own bias and my own mental inclinations.

But is not Akbar great enough not to need any adulation, much less any special pleading ? Notwithstanding faults, inconsistencies and even alleged hypocrisy, the man, by his dominating personality and breath-taking versatility, outshines all his contemporaries both here and elsewhere even though the period in which he lived abounded with sovereigns who have imprinted their personalities on the destinies of their respective countries.

Although much has been said and written on Akbar, I do not consider it necessary to apologise for adding one more book on him. Various monographs have been published in recent years on topics such as his religious policy, army, administration, revenue systems ; an authoritative biography of his appeared several decades ago. I have freely used materials both old and new collected with painstaking industry by scholars and historians. I would not be true to myself if I do not acknowledge my indebtedness to them.

Lastly I must express my deep gratitude to Dr. K. M. Munshi for his incessant encouragement in the preparation of this book and for making various useful suggestions when the book was being prepared.

I am also thankful to Mr. R. P. Aiyar for having gone through the manuscript and for making several useful suggestions.

'Sheela',
Khar, Bombay.
15-2-1959.

J. M. SHELAT

PREFACE TO THE SECOND IMPRESSION

I was not certain when this book was published how it would be received by its readers as the strong and vivacious personality of Akbar evoked even during his own life time, as thereafter, extreme views. If there have been historians and biographers pouring extreme adulation on him and his policies, there has not been a lack of detractors who have seen in him a selfish monarch with unlimited opportunism. While writing his biography, my endeavour therefore was two-fold, first to avoid the two extremes and to view him in the light of his acts and policies as objectively as possible, to read them in the light of the circumstances in which he reigned and lived, to see the impact which his admitted versatility made on the subjects, both Muslim as well as non-Muslim, over whom he ruled and the contribution it made towards the growth and development of political, economic and social life in this country.

The reviews which the book received on its publication were encouraging and justified its addition to the several studies and monographs already written on him and the institutes created or developed by him and left to the posterity. The fact that several of such institutes still survive and have served as foundations for the future ones, especially in the field of revenue, shows the extreme care with which they were introduced by him and his ministers. In consonance with the indigenous genius of the country which he ruled for over half a century, he dedicated his great and subtle intellect in diplomacy for furthering the policy of peace with all.

One of the reviewers suggested that it would have perhaps been proper if a chapter had been added summarising the achievements of his life and comparing him with the other monarchs who ruled during his period. But I have deliberately refrained from such a tempting task for I wrote his life with the object of presenting his personality as it gradually evolved from a young king who had lost almost all, except a small fragment of the conquests of his grandfather, Babur, having only a precarious hold even on such fragment and blossoming at the end of his career as the holder of a vast Empire, fabulously rich, powerful and perhaps the most versatile among his contemporaries. The presentation of his personality through such an evolutionary process had to end with his end and any addition of a chapter comparing him with the others who appeared on the curtain of history along with him would have been not only unsuitable but would have jarred upon the scheme of the work. The function of a biographer is to bring out faithfully and justly the personality of his subject and not to jostle him with others, whose acts and policies in fairness to them have to be assessed in the light of the facts and circumstances of their countries and the needs of the subjects over whom they ruled.

It is a matter of some gratification that the two-fold object with which this book was written has received the approval of the readers. That approval is manifested by the fact that the first edition is exhausted and a second impression is being brought out.

AHMEDABAD : J. M. SHELAT
January 11, 1964.

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CHAPTER X

TOWARDS LIBERALISM

I

In theory Islamic jurisprudence does not recognise a non-Muslim as a citizen of the State. That principle had, however, to be qualified when, with the expansion of their territories, the Khalifas were faced with the problem of having to reckon with their non-Muslim subjects. The Muslim jurists, therefore, gave such subjects a qualified status by imposing certain disabilities and fines for being suffered to exist in the State.

In India the problem was accentuated by the fact that the non-Muslim population formed an overwhelming majority. Since it was impossible to destroy such a vast number of subjects, the ruling class subjected them to several inequities and disqualifications, thus easing their conscience as the heads of the faithful in both spiritual and temporal matters.

There were laws of blasphemy which subjected the non-Muslims and the heretics among the Muslims alike to the whims of the Mullas who had the monopoly of propounding the true tenets. Forcible conversions of non-Muslims were sanctified both by law and custom. There were besides special laws which prohibited the conversion of Muslims or the reconversion of Hindus converted to Islam. The Tughlaqs and after them the Lodies had a persecuting strain in them. During their reigns there were numerous instances of forcible conversions.

The bigoted manner in which some of the Mullas applied the laws of blasphemy is illustrated by the case of Bodhan, a brahmin of Kaithan, who was beheaded during the reign of Sikandar Lodi for a mere assertion that Hinduism and Islam were both true.[1]

The *Jizya*, the most hated of all imposts, was an individual levy on all non-Muslims living under the Muslim rule. It was a heavy tax but what was really irksome was not so much its burden as the stamp of inferiority with which it branded the non-Muslim subject reminding him perpetually of his subjugation.

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[1] Ishwari Prasad, Mediaeval India (2nd Ed.), 445.

There was next the pilgrim tax invented as a compromise between the theoretical injunction of the Islamic rule not to tolerate public pursuit of non-Muslim religions and the desire of the vast Hindu population to perform their ancient and sacred rites. Since even the village fairs were taxed, this impost seems to have been almost universal.

Though the payment of these taxes was intended to ensure free exercise of religion to non-Muslims, the freedom was, nonetheless, limited to private worship. The non-Muslim subjects were never allowed to make any ostentatious display of their religion. In villages and towns where there were no Muslims, such prohibition against public worship could hardly be enforceable but in the cities it was applied in full vigour. There is no record of Hindus in villages and small towns having been punished for performing worship in public. That indicates that either the Hindus refrained from such public worship or the injunction against it was not strictly enforced. But the Hindus were not allowed in any event to build new temples or even to repair the existing ones.

When fresh territory was conquered, there would be a wave of destruction of temples as Jagannath Puri was destroyed by Feroze Shah Tughlaq. Even in peaceful times, a ruler like Sikandar Lodi in a spurt of frenzied religiosity would desecrate and destroy temples and salve his fanaticism.

The Hindus were strictly excluded from public services. Even the lowest officer in a *paragana* was and had to be a Muslim. The only exceptions were the petty revenue and account officers in the villages who were mostly Hindus. Often the Muslim officers took delight in preventing the Hindus from wearing rich clothes and the latter were sometimes forced to have some distinguishing marks on their apparel. The object was to humiliate them and to remind them of their inferior status.

During the middle ages, religious fanaticism was, however, a general characteristic of all countries. The position of the Hindus was on the whole not worse, was sometimes better than many communities in Europe.[2] Under Elizabeth, the Irish Catholics could abstain from attendance at the Protestant Churches only by payment of a fine. Mary Queen of Scots, at the time of her execution, was not only forbidden to have a Catholic priest by her side but a Protestant priest was forced on her. The position of Protestants in the Netherlands under the Spanish Catholic rulers was even worse. The Portuguese authorities in Goa and other West coast ports insisted, for instance, that pictures of the Virgin and Jesus should be pasted on passports issued by them to the Haj pilgrims obviously with a view to hurt their religious sentiments. The religious policy of intolerance and persecution followed by the Muslim rulers in India until the middle of the 16th century was in conformity with the general trend of the middle ages. It must be said to the credit of the Hindu rulers that they usually refrained from interfering with the religious practices of their subjects and never indulged in persecutions on the score of religion.[3]

Such were the conditions when Babur stepped on the throne of Delhi. Nurtured in the strict tenets of the Sunni sect, there was no room in the framework of his creed for religious toleration. He regarded all other forms of belief with aversion and even contempt. Even the Shias in his eyes where " rank heretics", followers of "an evil belief opposed to the pure faith." Hindus, of course, were pagans against whom he considered it a bounden duty to wage holy war. This was precisely the term he applied to his struggle against Maharana Sanga and by virtue of his victory over him at Khandwa he assumed the title of *Ghazi*, the victor of a holy war. The capture of Chanderi was celebrated by a " pillar of pagan heads set up on a hill."

Babur was no less brutal with the people of Bajaur, Muslims though they were, because he considered them " as rebels and at enmity with the people of Islam and as by reason of the heathenish hostile customs prevailing in their midst, the very name of Islam was rooted out from their tribe." They were, therefore, put to general massacre and their wives and children were made captives.[4]

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[2] Sri Ram Sharma, Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors, 6, 8. Ishwari Prasad, Mediaeval India, 446.

[3] Ibid, 8.

For the same reason, two Jain statues at Urwa, near Gwalior, were destroyed with the ruthlessness characteristic of the descendant of Timur. His own couplet illustrates his concept of religious duty as a true Muslim :—

> " For Islam's sake I wandered in the wilds,
> Prepared for war with Pagans and Hindus,
> Resolved myself to meet the Martyr's death
> Thanks be to God ! a Ghazi I became. "[5]

With these notions about the true faith, Babur easily slipped into the policy of his predecessors. The bigotry of the Lodis and more particularly of Sikandar was yet fresh in the minds of the officials who continued to serve under Babur. Never an innovator, nor a great administrator, nor one given to metaphysical doubts, he was content to govern in the orthodox fashion. Besides, his policy was determined by two factors. Some of the Afghan chiefs, like the powerful Mewatis had joined the Hindus under the banner of Sanga. Secondly he had yet to fight against the Hindus under Sanga. He knew that such a fight would be a life and death struggle. He could not therefore afford to alienate the orthodox Muslims.

Babur's appeal to his soldiers on the eve of the battle of Khandwa was based on the Islamic duty to destroy the infidels and win the glory of martyrdom.[6] During his reign, he not only continued but increased the discrimination against the Hindus by exempting the Muslims from stamp duties and confining the tax to non-Muslims alone. One of his chiefs, Hindu Beg, converted a temple at Sambhal into a mosque. Shaikh Zain, his *Sadr*, desecrated a great many temples at Chanderi. In 1528-1529 Mir Bagi destroyed a famous temple at Ayodhya under his orders and built a mosque in its place.[7]

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[4] S. M. Edwardes, Babur; Diarist and Despot, 61.
[5] Ibid, 39.
[6] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 446-447.
[7] Sri Ram Sharma, Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors, 9.

His successor, Humayun, had not much chance of evolving any distinct religious policy of his own. His indolent temperament led him to follow the path of least resistance. His outlook is reflected in his conduct towards Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, when during his march against that ruler, he waited at Sarangpur to allow Bahadur to complete his conquest of Chitor. As an orthodox Sunni, heresy to him was as heinous a crime as infidelity. But two circumstances forced him to compromise with his strict Sunnism and at least tolerate Shi'sm; (1) the position of Bairam Khan and his loyalty to the dynasty and (2) his obligations to Persia where the State religion was Shi'sm. His *Sadr-us-Sadr* was known to be a heretic.[8] Thus an inroad, though indistinct and not too overt, was made in the citadel of Sunni orthodoxy.

Sher Shah was perhaps the greatest Muslim ruler before Akbar. But in religious matters he was not less inflexible than his predecessors. His attack on Maldeo of Jodhpur was partly political and partly due to a desire to convert the temples there into mosques. A temple converted by him into a mosque is still extant in Jodhpur known as Shershahi mosque. His treachery towards Puranmal was explained by him to his officers as having been done to earn religious merit by exterminating an infidel. He was thus a typical product of his age. His successor, Islam Shah, brought the State under the complete domination of the Mullas. It was only the civil war after his death that broke the tradition of intolerance and gave an opportunity to a man like Hemu not only to become the Prime Minister of Adil Shah but to command the Afghans both against the Afghan rivals of his sovereign and against Akbar at Panipat.

II

In the very beginning of his reign, Akbar was confronted with this spirit of fanaticism when Bairam invited him to kill Hemu, not as a rebel or a foe but as an infidel and earn the laurels of a *Ghazi* by striking the wounded and disarmed Hindu general. In the early years of Akbar's reign, notwithstanding a Shia like Bairam being the head of the administration, it was not infrequent for heretics to be executed. Mir Habshi, a doctor of Laws and Khizr Khan Sarwani were the victims of the executioner's axe at the instance of the orthodox Mullas at court, one for being a Shia and the other for blasphemy.[9]

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[8] Ibid, 10.

There were others too who shared the same fate. In 1569, Mirza Muqim and Mir Yakub of Kashmir were executed for holding unorthodox opinions at the orders of Shaikh Abdunnabi, the Chief *Sadr*[10]. Hemu's father, Rai Puranmal, when captured, was offered his life if he agreed to embrace Islâm and was beheaded when he declined. Husain Khan, the Governor of Lahore, made himself obnoxious by ordering the Hindus to stick patches of different colours on their shoulders so that no Muslim might be put to the indignity of showing them honour through mistake and thus acquired the nickname of *Tukria.* [11] He even prohibited the Hindus "in accordance with the requirements of the Holy Law" to saddle their horses and insisted that they use pack-saddles while riding.[12]

Even the family of Shaikh Mubarak did not escape persecution. Shaikh Abdunnabi and Mulla Abdullah, the *Makhdum-ul-mulk* represented to Akbar that Shaikh Mubarak pretended to be the *Mahdi*, the forerunner of the Messiah and that he not only damned himself but preached others to perdition. The Shaikh found himself in such a terrible predicament that he not only had to conceal himself with his two sons but seek refuge with Shaikh Salim Chisti at Fathpur. Even Shaikh Salim could do nothing to save them from the fury of the Mullas except to send some money to help Mubarak to fly to Gujarat. Mubarak at last saved himself by seeking the help of Mirza Aziz Koka, the foster-brother of Akbar, who vouchsafed his loyalty and then only "the Emperor at last gave up all thoughts of killing the Shaikh."[13]

In 1572 Husain Quli Khan's men desecrated the celebrated temple of Mahanadi at Nagarkot. Even the presence of Birbal amongst them did not deter them from their heinous act. A Mughal officer, Bayazid, likewise, converted an ancient temple at Benaras into a mosque. Such indeed was the dominance of the orthodox that the appointment of Mansingh as the commander at Haldighati battle was resented by several amirs at Court. The appointment of Todermal also as the *Vazir* was taken exception to and Akbar himself was forced to defend his choice.

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[9] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 262.
[10] Ibid, 128.
[11] Ibid, 227, 228.
[12] Ibid, 228.
[13] Ibid, 202.

It is to the credit of Akbar that he fought strenuously against this fanaticism even at the risk of his throne. His mind seems to have been as restless as his body. Throughout his life he persevered, sometimes hesitantly, often tentatively, to discover the truth of unity of man with his Maker. His endeavour was to bring about a fusion amongst the various creeds and faiths to which his subjects belonged. His task in this field was not at all easy, for he had to formulate a religious policy on his own without the advice of a Minister and in the atmosphere of fanaticism and bigotry which characterised the religious policy of Muslim rulers. It was no wonder that he was often seized with melancholia and felt the burden of governance too heavy for a single head.

In the atmosphere of religious intolerance that he inherited, the process of forming a distinct religious policy had to be slow and tardy. In the beginning he allowed himself to be guided and even governed by such men as Shaikh Abdunnabi and the Mullas and did not "come out of the veil" in the piquant phrase of Abul Fazl.

About the end of 1561 Akbar went off one night to Fathpur from Agra and passed by Mandhakar a tiny village on the way. A number of men were chanting ditties about the glory of Khwaja Muinudin.[14] "His Majesty who was a seeker after Truth and who in his zealous quests" for truth often discussed with holy men felt a strong inclination to visit the shrine of the Khwaja at Ajmer.[15] The visit became an annual affair right until 1579.

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[14] The Khwaja was born in 1142 A.D. and died at Ajmer on March 16, 1236. A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Jarrett, III 361.

[15] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, II, 237.

Another incident which occurred in 1567 shows Akbar's callousness towards human life, a streak of Tartar savagery in his blood and contempt towards the faith of others during his early years. He was on his way to Agra from Lahore and had reached Ambala. Keshav Puri, the head of the sect of Puri Monks came and complained that their usual place of camping at the Kurukshetra Tank had been usurped by the rival sect of the Kurs and that a fight between the two was inevitable. Akbar went to the spot with his retainers. As persuasion had no effect on the followers of the two sects he allowed them to fight out the issue. Bows and arrows, swords and stones were freely used in the fight. The Puris, however, were few in number and the fight was unequal. Out of frolic, Akbar lent some of his own men to assist the Puris. The Puris, thus strengthened, killed the rival Mahant, Anand Kur. There were many casualties on both the sides. The event appeared to Akbar a mere gladiators' fight. His panegyrist relates that "the holy heart which is the colourist of destiny's worship was highly delighted with this sport"[16].

Like many of his contemporaries, Akbar was not free from superstitions. Until he was 28 years old, no child of his had survived and he was praying continually for the survival of a son. "As the great master Khwaja Muinudin Chisti." Jahangir noted later on, "was the fountain head of the saints of India, he considered that in order to obtain the object he should have recourse to his blessed threshold and resolved within himself that if Almighty God should bestow a son on him, he would, by way of complete humility, go on foot from Agra to his blessed Mausoleum, a distance of 140 *kos*"[17]. To receive the boon of a son, he sought the company of dervishes, ascetics and theologians.

Through Shaikh Mahomed Bokhari, Hakim Ain-al-mulk and other courtiers he came to know of Salim Chisti of Sikri and decided that the mother of the future Salim should, during her pregnancy, stay in the hermitage of the Shaikh. This was because it was believed at the Court that his previous children had died in infancy as Agra was an inauspicious place for him. The grand capital he built at Fathpur was born out of superstition.

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[16] Ibid, 424.

[17] Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Tr. Rogers and Beveridge, I, 1-2.

On January 20, 1570, to fulfil the vow he had taken before Salim was born, Akbar set out on foot from Agra for Ajmer, each day walking a distance of 10 to 12 *kos*.[18] Jahangir tells us of his visit to Shaikh Salim. "One day, when waiting on him and in a state of distraction he asked him how many sons he should have. The Shaikh replied: 'The Giver who gives without being asked will bestow three sons to you'. My father said 'I have made a vow that casting my first son on the skirt of your favour, I will make your friendship and kindness his protector and preserver." The Shaikh accepted this idea and said "I congratulate you and I will give my own name." So impressed was Akbar with the Shaikh's powers to grant the boon that "whether in his cups or in his sober moments" he never referred to his eldest son either as Mahomed Salim or Sultan Salim but always as "Shaikhu Baba."[19]

Upto 1562 Akbar remained under the dominance of one or the other of his Ministers or relations. After that year, he cast off all the influences around him and afterwards, though he consulted others, he followed his own light.

By the end of 1574 Akbar had made many conquests and, except for the Deccan, he was the lord of the greater part of India. He was now free to employ himself in his favourite pastime of religious discussions. "Discourses on philosophy," he used to say, "have such a charm for me that they distract me from all else."[20]

In January 1575 he issued orders for the erection of the House of Worship "*Ibadat-Khana*" in the palace gardens where these discourses could be held. The building had four halls, the western hall for the Sayyids, the southern for the *Ullemas*, the northern for the Shaikhs and the eastern for the nobles and officers of the Court interested in the discussions.[21]

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[18] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, II, 508, 511.
[19] Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Tr. Rogers & Beveridge, 1, 2.
[20] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Jarrett, III, 386.
[21] Nizamuddin, Tabakat-i-Akbari, in Ell & Daw, V, 391.

The building was constructed in place of the deserted cell of Shaikh Abdulla Niyazi Surhindi, a disciple of Salim Chisti.[22] Every Friday evening Akbar went to the House of Worship after attending the prayers in the new chapel of Shaikh-ul-Islam and held meetings there over which he himself presided.[23] At first only Muslims were admitted but by 1578 Hindus, Christians and leaders of other faiths were also invited to take part in the discussions.[24] These discussions were often acrimonious but they broke the supremacy of the *Ullemas* and the Mullas and convinced the Emperor of the insufficiency of the orthodox doctrines as be to supreme over all other faiths.

In 1565, Akbar had appointed Shaikh Abdunnabi as his Chief *Sadr*. The *Sadr* had unlimited powers including the power of putting persons to death on a charge of heresy or blasphemy independently of the King. He had equally unlimited powers and patronage over charities and grants of lands to the religious heads and men of learning. Abdunnabi in fact was so powerful that he would not even deign to pay any attention to the greatest of the Imperial officers and even Akbar had to stand barefooted before him on one occasion.

This combination of ecclesiastical power with vast patronage of charity grants naturally led to corruption. Under Abdunnabi, the corrupt working of the ecclesiastical department became an open scandal and a disgrace to the State. The fall, on the other hand, of the *Ullemas* was hastened by their tall pretensions and a monopolistic claim to infallibility.

The discussions in the House of Worship, not infrequently inspired by Akbar himself, brought forth open allegations against both Abdunnabi and the *Ullemas*. Mulla Abdullah, the *Makhdum-ul-mulk* was charged with avoiding payment of legal alms by making over his property to his wife at the end of each year and reconveying it back at the beginning of the next year. "Stories were told one after another about his meanness and shabbiness and baseness and world liness and oppression, all which vices were exhibited towards holy and deserving men, especially those of the Punjab......... They told also other stories founded upon his villainy, sordid disposition and contemptible conduct and they ended by deciding that he ought to be shipped off *nolens volens* to Makkah."[25] Haji Ibrahim Sirhindi, the provincial *Sadr* of Gujarat was likewise charged with bribery and dismissed. Kazi Jalaluddin of Multan was found to have forged a royal order for half a million of *tankas*.

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[22] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 204.

[23] Ibid, 204.

[24] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 364, 266.

Besides the prevalent corruption, the behaviour and conduct of the *Ullemas* were such as to disgust Akbar, who until now was persuaded to believe in their saintliness, virtues and infallibility. "All at once one night" says Badaoni, "the vein of the neck of the *Ullema* of the age swelled up and a horrid noise and confusion ensued. His Majesty got very angry at their rude behaviour and said to me 'In future report any of the *Ullema* who talks nonsense and cannot behave himself and I shall make him leave the hall'. I said gently to Asaf Khan 'If I carried out this order, most of the *Ullemas* would have to leave', when His Majesty suddenly asked what I had said. On hearing my answer he was highly pleased and mentioned my remark to those sitting near him."[26]

The Opposition to the Mullas was led by Abul Fazl who had by now been introduced in the Court. His star was already in the ascendant. Questions which would obviously embarrass the *Sadr* were deliberately asked. The Emperor himself wanted to know how many free-born wives a man could legally wed. When the *Ullemas* replied that four was the permitted limit, the Emperor remarked that Shaikh Abdunnabi had once told him that one of the *Mujtahids*, (an infallible authority on Muslim law) had allowed as many as nine wives. Faced with his own opinion Shaikh Abdunnabi tried to wringgle out of it by replying that he had not given a *fatwa* at the time but had merely pointed out that a difference of opinion had existed among the lawyers. "This annoyed His Majesty very much." "The Shaikh", said he, "told me at the time a very different thing to what he tells me now."[27]

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25. Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 206.
26. Ibid, 205.
27. Ibid, 211.

Even the Chief Kazi, Kazi Yakub, could not throw any enlightenment. Akbar was so annoyed with him that he at once transferred him to the distant Gaur reducing him to the grade of a mere district Kazi and appointed in his place Maulana Jalaludin of Multan as the Chief Kazi. "The veteran lawyers such as Makhdum-ul-mulk, Qazi Yakub and others were the losers by this affair and from this moment, their power began to wane."[28]

Akbar was no doubt fortunate in having men like Shaikh Mubarak and his two famous sons, Faizi and Abul Fazl. With their brilliance and scholastic abilities they were more than a match for the *Ullemas* and Mullas. But the credit for the liberal policy must go to Akbar himself for he had already started it long before the two brothers came to the Court. Though these two "strengthened, fed and encouraged the policy", the initiator was the Emperor.[29]

Akbar, though not versed in letters, was well acquainted with history. His predecessors had governed the vast Hindu population with force and sternness but had failed to win their affection. Their occupation of the country had no foundation in the loyalty of the people. In the last 300 years seven dynasties, the Slaves, the Khiljis, the Tughlaqs, the Sayyids, the Lodis and the Surs, had ruled the country each on an average for only half a century. They were all regarded as foreigners to be despised and tolerated only so long as circumstances compelled and to be overthrown at the earliest opportunity.

Profiting by the mistakes of his predecessors, Akbar had made up his mind to regard India as his adopted country and not to remain content with being a mere leader of an alien military garrison who kept the country under forcible subjugation. With Bairam Khan as the head of the administration, the process of the break-up of the supremacy of strict Sunnism had already started. He, a Shia and therefore a heretic, had to be tolerated by the Mughal amirs. Both Humayun and Akbar owed the throne

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28. Ibid, 213.
29. Sri Ram Sharma, Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors 20, 21.

of India to his devoted efforts. He had dared to appoint Abdul Latif, a scholar known for his broadness of outlook as the tutor of Akbar and his friend Shaikh Gadai, a Shia, as *Sadr*. Humayun himself was suspected to have compromised with Shi'sm. In the Court circles it was known that he had purchased Persian help to win Kabul and Kandahar by at least a show of respect towards Shia practices. The citadel of Sunni orthodoxy had already been assailed and weakened.

The policy of toleration that Akbar finally evolved had its roots in his secular policy. That was to accomplish fusion amongst the various classes of his subjects. His policy of marriages with Rajput princesses, though pursued for political ends,[30] had considerable influence on his attitude towards his non-Muslim subjects. This policy gave an altogether different complexion to his efforts at territorial expansion for he ceased to be regarded as a mere foreign adventurer like his predecessors. From 1562 and onwards the powerful Kachhwaha Rajputs of Amber came to be closely associated with his career.

The marriage with the Amber princess was not a sudden affair. Long before the offer, Majnun Khan Qaqshahi of Narnaul had mentioned to Akbar the leanings of Biharimal towards him. Biharimal was thereupon summoned to Court and the Amber ruler presented himself with a band of his Rajputs. After the presentation of robes of honour to Biharimal and his sons, the Raja sought leave for his departure. Akbar happened to be riding a *mast* elephant at the time, which not yet fully tamed, was rushing about wildly. People around were running away helter-skelter. But when the elephant turned towards Biharimal, his Rajputs stood their ground firmly. This at once evoked the young Emperor's admiration for them. Turning towards Biharimal he exclaimed "we'll rear you", a remark which Beveridge interprets as an allusion to the marriage which occurred later on.[31]

In August 1564, Miran Mubarak Shah of Khandesh sent an embassy at Agra with a request that Akbar should marry

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30. Nizamuddin, Tabakat-i-Akbari, in Ell & Daw, V. 273; A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, II, 242-244.
31. A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, II, 70, 71.

his daughter. The offer was accepted and Itimad Khan, the distinguished eunuch, was sent to Asir to fetch the Khandesh princess.[32] In October 1576 Birbal and Lonkaran went to Dungarpur to bring the Dungarpur princess to Fathpur.[33] In October 1570 Akbar went to Ajmer soon after Murad's birth. On the way Kalyanmal of Bikaner and his son Raisingh were received with honour. Kalyanmal proposed that his brother Karan's daughter should be accepted in marriage. The marriage was solemnised at Nagor. About the same time Rawal Har Rai of Jesalmer gave his daughter to Akbar and Raja Bhagwandas was deputed to bring the bride to the Imperial harem.[34]

On February 2, 1584 the marriage of Prince Salim with the daughter of Raja Bhagwandas was celebrated at Lahore with great pomp. The Raja gave an unprecedented dowry which included 100 elephants.[35] In August 1587 Prince Kushru was born of that union.[36] In June 1586 the wedding of Rai Singh's daughter with Salim was celebrated at the house of Bhagwandas.[37]

These marriages had great effect in the shaping of both secular and religious policies. Former Muslim rulers had often married Rajput princesses forcibly but Akbar's marriages differed in character as they were never the result of coercion. The princesses and their entourage brought into the Royal palace enjoyed full liberty to follow their own religious practices and to worship their deities. Abul Fazl observes that '*homs*' were performed daily at Fathpur palace. Since worship of Hindu deities was performed in the Palace itself, it became illogical to prohibit it outside. The repugnance of a Sunni towards Hindu rites and Hindu gods was thus snapped in Akbar.[38]

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[32] Ibid, 35.
[33] Ibid, 278, 295.
[34] Ibid, 518. Nizamuddin, Tabakat-i-Akbari, in Ell & Daw, V, 335.
[35] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 678.
[36] Ibid, 799.
[37] Ibid, 799.
[38] Sri Ram Sharma, Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors, 17, 21.

The first important step towards liberalism was taken when in March 1564 the hated *Jizya* tax was repealed. As justification for the repeal Abul Fazl records that unlike the former times, those who belonged to non-Muslim creeds were no longer the enemies of the Government. On the contrary they "like those of one mind and one religion, bound up the waist of devotion and service and exert themselves for the advancement of the dominion." "How should those dissenters, whose separation is founded on mere habit and imitation and whose zeal and devotion are the real things, be claimed with that old faction which cherished mortal enmity, and be the subjects of contempt and slaughter?" There was considerable disapproval among the Muslim courtiers and officials but the reform was pushed through.[39]

The abolition of this hated impost was a turning point in the history of Muslim rule in India. It was a step towards the establishment of a common citizenship for all subjects, Muslims and Hindus. The credit for it goes to Akbar. It was done long before Abul Fazl and his brother Faizi were introduced to the Court and when Akbar was only 22 years old.

About the same time the royal camp was at Mathura on a hunting expedition. Akbar noticed a tax being collected there on the pilgrims. It irked him to find that the State was making profit out of the religious beliefs of the majority of his subjects. He at once issued orders to stop the collection of this tax. He often used to say that to levy an impost on people who were trying through their own creed to attain unity of themselves with God was improper.[40]

The abolition of these discriminatory imposts and fines naturally implied liberty to all subjects to worship in their own chosen ways. It implied also the abolition of the supremacy of the Muslim faith and of the distinction between the ruling race and the ruled. It did away incidentally with the prevalent notion of an average Muslim that a comparative study of the books of another religion amounted to profanity. The Hindus, too, had been reluctant to let others look into their sacred books. These tendencies had kept the two races apart.

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[39] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 316, 317.
[40] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, II, 295.

To break this isolation between the two classes of his subjects which had its roots in distrust, Akbar had a translation department organised. Sanskrit works had been translated into Persian before, but they were exceptions.[41] A regular programme was now chalked out. *Atharva Ved*, *Mahabharat*, *Ramayana*, *Panchtantra* and *Harivansha* were, one by one, translated. Volumes of such translations, beautifully written by accomplished caligraphists and decorated with paintings, were not only kept in the Imperial Library but the amirs and officers were induced to purchase copies. A Sanskrit Almanac and other secular works in Sanskrit on such subjects as medicine, mathematics, astrology, astronomy, history and poetry were translated. For the first time the vast scope of Hindu literature became known to those who had until then no conception of its grandeur and beauty.

In later years, even restrictions on the building of temples and other places of public worship were removed. This led to a spurt of building activity of numerous temples at many sacred places. The Hindu Rajas made the most of this opportunity. Mansingh built a temple at Brindavan at a cost of half a million rupees and another at Benaras. Even Christian churches were allowed to be built, one at Agra and another at Lahore. Permission to build them at Cambay and Thatta was also granted. Ujjain saw many Jain temples being built.[42]

In the promulgation of these and other measures, both Birbal and Abul Fazl played conspicuous role. Notwithstanding uncomplimentary and often unjust remarks made against him by some of the writers, Abul Fazl was a man of wide and catholic convictions. In his prefatory remarks to *Ain-i-Akbari*, he observes that he found past writers inaccurate

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41. Ishwari Prasad, Mediaeval India, 501.
42. Sri Ram Sharma, Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors, 23, 24.

and he had therefore recourse to Hindu works from where he found that notwithstanding their apparent polytheism, the real doctrine of the Hindu scriptures was the unity of the Supreme Being. "It was indispensable in me therefore" he adds, "to bring into open evidence the system of philosophy, the degrees of self-discipline and the gradations of rites and usage of the race in order that hostility towards them might abate and the temporal sword be stayed a while from the shedding of blood, that discussions within and without be turned to peace and the thornbrake of strife and enmity bloom into a garden of concord."[43] Then again: "Were the eyes of the mind possessed of true vision, each individual would withdraw from this indiscriminating turmoil and attend rather to his own solicitudes than interfere in the concerns of others...... If the doctrine of the enemy be in itself good, why should hands be stained in the blood of its professors? And even were it otherwise the sufferer from the malady fully deserves commiseration, not hostility and the shedding of blood."[44]

Akbar saw in Abul Fazl a man after his own heart with a subtle, alert and flexible intellect. Even the Jesuits commended him as pre-eminent in the qualities of mind. The Emperor found in him a precious ally and a great comfort in his religious and theological adventures.

Akbar sincerely believed that as a king he had a great mission to fulfil. He felt the weight of it which he himself once related: "One night my heart was weary of the burden of life; when suddenly between sleeping and waking, a strange vision appeared to me and my spirit was comforted."[45] To ease that burden he plunged into discussions on philosophy, history, theology and revelations. These discourses had such a charm for him that he admitted that "I forcibly restrain myself from listening to them lest the necessary duties of the hour should be neglected."[46]

He himself explained what was troubling his mind. "Although I am the master of so vast a kingdom and all the

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43. A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Jarrett, III, 1, 2.
44. Ibid, 386, 387.
45. Ibid, 386.
46. Ibid, 386.

appliances of government are to my hand, yet since true greatness consists in doing the will of God, my mind is not at ease in this diversity of sects and creeds; and apart from this outward pomp of circumstance, with what satisfaction in my despondency, "can I undertake the sway of empire? I await the coming of some discreet man of principle who would resolve the difficulties of my conscience." Even when he had just completed his twentieth year he felt life bitter "from the lack of spiritual provision for my last journey." The mood of renunciation was so pressing that he felt that if he could find someone capable of governing the kingdom "I would at once place the burden upon his shoulders and withdraw thereupon." [47]

Struggling through the conflicting opinions that he received from the leaders of the various faiths whom he summoned to the Court and the numerous works on theology and philosophy he had read to him, Akbar reached the conclusion that every creed had something to teach and that the best spiritual doctrine is the one that is based on rationalism. "Reason is the sole criterion of truth, not tradition nor testimony." "Miracles", said he, "occur in the temples of every creed. This is the product of mental enthusiasm for the truth can be but one."

In a mood of frank humility, Akbar even lashed out at himself. "Formerly", he told the men around him, "I persecuted men in conformity with my faith and deemed it Islam. As I grew in knowledge I was overwhelmed in shame. Not being a Muslim myself it was unmeet to force others to become such. What constancy is to be expected from proselytes on compulsion.?"[48] These remarks were seized upon in their literal sense by those who disapproved of his innovations, and even some modern writers have interpreted them as a confession of his having ceased to be a Muslim by faith. What Akbar meant was that he had ceased to believe in the efficacy of such rites as the necessity of the five prayers held essential by the strict Sunnis at his Court.

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47. A. F. Ain-i-Akbari Tr. Jarrett, III, 386, 387.
48. Ibid, 382, 393.

As Akbar gathered more and more knowledge through discussions, through a vast number of books and personal experiences, he began to get impatient with the Muslim theologians and lawyers around him. Badaoni who came to Court about the same time as Abul Fazl noticed the sharp change that was taking place in the Emperor. Akbar had gradually lost faith in the Mullas and the *Ullemas*, in their learning or in the purity of their lives. No valid purpose was served by those who subsisted on *Suryugal* lands, lands granted by the State for charitable and educational objects. They served, on the contrary, to fatten corrupt men and to encourage bigotry and exclusiveness. The Mullas had, since the beginning of the Muslim power in India, subsisted on such *Suryugal* lands.

A *Firman* was now issued that these lands should not be exempted from the revenue assessments unless those who held them produced a certificate that their grants and pensions had been inspected and confirmed by the *Sadr*. There where vehement protests. The *Firman* meant that the Mullas had to come from distant places to Fathpur for verification of their grants by the *Sadr* Shaikh Abdunnabi. Badaoni, who voiced the Mullas' cause, lamented that unless a Mulla had some Amir to back him or bribed the *Sadr* or his men, he could not evade assessment. The Shaikh, he complained, took away grants or reduced them in the pride of his power and granted lands to worthless people including even some Hindus. "Thus learning and learned men," bemoans this critic, "fell from day to day into lower estimation." "Never in the time of any Emperor had such absolute power been given into the hand of any *Sadr*." No doubt Abdunnabi was corrupt and his corruption soon led to his downfall but Badaoni had a special grudge against the Shaikh and in his characteristic caustic way he composed a verse for the *Sadr* which came true in a short time.

"When a rustic becomes a judge
He wills such decrees, that they will kill him."[49]

The power of the Mullas had already waned. Their leader, Mulla Abdullah, had been disgraced and dismissed.

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[49] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 207, 208.

Akbar had gradually become aware also of the rampant corruption existing in the *Sadr* department and the sharp practices followed by the *Sadr*, Abdunnabi himself. Besides, had not Shaikh Abdunnabi expressed divergent views on the numerous marriages of the Emperor and even resiled from the advice tendered to him from time to time ?

Shaikh Mubarak, whose star was rising at this time, put the idea into the Emperor's head that he was the real *Imam* and *Mujtahid* of the age and that he need not have the assistance of the *Ullemas.*[50] These ideas of Mubarak had fallen on willing ears and accelerated the downfall of the *Sadr*. Mubarak and his two sons had special reason to wish the fall of Abdunnabi. In the early years, it was Abdunnabi who had persecuted them and nearly brought about their end. Early in 1580 Abdunnabi was dismissed and though Khwaja Mahomed was appointed in his place, his powers as the new *Sadr* were considerably clipped.[51]

As time went on, Akbar, no doubt, began to entertain the ambition of becoming the spiritual head of the State also. In the year 983 A.H.(1575 A.D.) he asked how it would appear to his subjects if the words " *Allah-Akbar*" were imprinted on the seals and the coins. The words were ambiguous in their meaning and might well apply to him also. Everyone present agreed but Haji Ibrahim alone objected, pointing out the impropriety. Akbar felt he was found out, got annoyed and said that he had merely asked advice as to the aptness of the words but had no intention to attach divinity to himself. "No man," he rebuked the Haji, "who felt his weakness would claim divinity."[52]

The free exchange of ideas among those who met in the *Ibadatkhana* had wrought this change in Akbar. Badaoni, who was of the orthodox sect, watched with anger this change and the lapses of the Emperor. From now on, he became vindictive and bitter in his comments.

During 1575-1576 came two brothers to the Court, Hakim Abul Fath and Nuruddin and they soon became the favourites of the Emperor. Badaoni insinuates that they flattered the King and adapted themselves to every change in the King's opinions. From Persia came Mulla Mahomed Yazdi who tried to turn Akbar into a Shia but "he was soon left behind by Birbal—that bastard ! and by Shaikh Abul Fazl and Hakim Abul Fath who successfully turned the Emperor from Islam and led him to reject inspiration, prophetship, the miracles of the Prophet and of the saints and even the whole law, so that I could no longer bear their company." Badaoni saw that the observance of the five prayers and the belief in everything connected with the Prophet were rejected as vain superstitions and man's reason was acknowledged as the only basis of religion.[53] To make matters worse, Akbar ordered Kazi Jalaluddin and others to write a commentary on Koran, a proposal considered profane by the orthodox section. Badaoni found to his satisfaction however that nothing came of this proposal except that it "led to great dissensions among them.."[54]

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[50] Ibid, 127.
[51] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Blochmann, I, 270, 272.
[52] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 213.

Akbar's growing disbelief in the orthodox dogma and his omission to observe the rites made men of the type of Badaoni denounce him as an apostate. That denunciation was readily accepted by some of the contemporaries; even some of the later writers like Smith have followed suit. That Akbar still remained and was throughout a Muslim is seen clearly from his own acts and his steady refusal to yield to the frantic efforts of the Jesuits to convert him to Christianity.

On October 22, 1573 Akbar had the ceremony of circumcision of the three princes performed with great eclat. On that occasion, he had himself weighed against precious stones and large gifts and alms were distributed amongst the poor. On November 18, 1573 Prince Salim was ceremoniously handed over for his education to the charge of Maulana Mir Kartan Harair.[55] On March 3, 1574, that being the 19th year of his accession, he gave a great feast at the shrine of Shaikh Muinuddin at Ajmer.[56] Even in far-off Mewar, two districts, Mohan and Rampura from among the districts under the Imperial control, were renamed as Islampur. He tried to set up Muslim colonies in the other districts thereby giving large tracts to them in Budhnor, Rhulia, Bavebra, Pur and Bhimravar[57]. In 1575 his aunt Gulbadan Begum, Salima Sultana Begum and other eminent ladies from the harem decided to go to Haj. On October 9, 1575 the party started from Fathpur and Prince Murad was ordered to escort them upto the Imperial boundaries. Orders were issued to all provincial officers to see to the safety and comforts of the travelling party. At the last minute Murad was substituted by Baqi Khan, Rumi Khan and others who formed the guard.[58]

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[53] Ibid, 214, 215.
[54] Ibid, 215.
[55] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 103, 106.
[56] Ibid, 113, 114.

So anxious was Akbar about the safety of his Muslim subjects going to the Haj that he even sent Haji Habibullah to Goa with large funds and choice articles to be presented to the Portuguese authorities instructing him also to purchase and bring to the Court rare articles. On his return from Goa Habibullah brought an organ, an article greatly admired in Court circles.[59]

Although Gulbadan and her party left Fathpur in 1575 they were detained for nearly a year in Gujarat. In October 1576 while passing through Udaipur, Akbar learnt that some persons had harassed the royal pilgrims. Akbar at once summoned Qulij Khan to Banswara from Gujarat, sent him to Surat where Qulij Khan chartered two ships *Satmi* and *Illahi* through the assistance of a Cambay merchant. The ships sailed from Surat but on the way one of them foundered and the party had to stay at Aden for nearly a year. After some vicissitudes, they reached Hijaz and, after a stay of 3½ years, they returned to India in 1582.[60]

At about this time Sha Abu Tirab and Itimad Khan of Gujarat also returned from Haj bringing with them a stone so heavy that it required an elephant to carry it. Shah Abu Tirab declared that there was a clear impression of the foot of the Prophet on the stone. Akbar, charged with having abandoned the faith of his forefathers, went a distance of four *kos*, accompanied by his amirs. He ordered them "to carry it by turns a few steps and in this manner they brought it to the city."[61] In September 1577 Akbar appointed the same Shah Abu Tirab as the caravan leader of the Haj pilgrims, entrusting him with five lacs of rupees and 16,000 *khilats* to distribute among the residents of Hijaz.[62]

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[57] Sri Ram Sharma, Maharana Pratap, 38, 39.
[58] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 205.
[59] Ibid, 207.
[60] Ibid, 275, 277.

In October 1576, Abul Fazl informs us, the Emperor himself felt the need of undertaking a journey to Haj. Owing to his pre-occupations, especially his war against Rana Pratap, he could not go and appointed Khwaja Naqshbandi as his *amir-i-Haj* giving him six lacs of rupees and 12,000 *khilats* for distribution there. On the day the Khwaja started on his journey, Akbar put on the dress of a pilgrim, took the Khwaja by his hand and appointed him as his deputy.[63]

After the return of Gulbadan, it became an established practice for the next 5 or 6 years to appoint one of the amirs as the leader of the pilgrims. A general permission was given to all to go on pilgrimage. Even Badaoni admits that the Emperor sent many to Mecca "with gold and goods and rich presents" at considerable public expense.

From this evidence, it is impossible to give credence to the accusation of Badaoni and some others that Akbar was an apostate.

The movement to curtail the power and patronage so long enjoyed by the Mullas was gathering strength amongst the progressive elements at the Court. Their object was to change the theocratic complexion of the administration into a secular one. The first step was to concentrate the powers and functions so far vested in the *Ullemas* and the Mullas in the King. With that end in view Shaikh Faizi and others persuaded Akbar to read the *Kutbah* in the chief mosque at Fathpur. He did so about the end of June 1579. There was considerable stir in the orthodox section who immediately protested against it as being contrary to custom.

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[61] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 320.
[62] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 305, 306.
[63] Ibid, 271.

Voicing this protest, Badaoni commented that this was an attempt on the part of Akbar "to unite in his person the spiritual as well as the secular headships for he held it to be an insufferable burden to subordinate to any one." The Emperor had been told, he noted, that the Prophet and his successors and even some of the kings had themselves read the *Kutbah* and he resolved to do the same apparently to imitate them but in reality to appear before the public as the *Mutjahid* of the age. The orthodox Badaoni could not resist remarking that the Emperor "stammered and faltered and though assisted by others he could scarcely read three verses of a peom" which Faizi had composed for the occasion and at once came down from the pulpit handing over the task to Hafiz Mahomed Amin, the Court *Khatib*.[64] The statement of Badaoni that Akbar lost his nerve is, however, not borne out by his friend Nazimuddin who also describes the reading of the *Kutbah*.[65] According to Abul Fazl Akbar in fact preached several times in that mosque after this incident.[66]

III

It is in the light of these events that the document styled "The Infallibility Decree" which was published in the beginning of September 1579 should be examined. As translated by Lowe [67] it reads as follows:—

> "Whereas Hindustan is now become the centre of security and peace, and the land of justice and beneficence, a large number of people, especially learned men and lawyers, have immigrated and chosen this country for their home.
>
> Now we, the principal '*Ulama*', who are not only well-versed in the several departments of the Law and in the principles of jurisprudence, and well-acquainted with the edicts which rest on reason or testimony, but are also known for our piety and honest intentions, have duly

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[64] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 277.
[65] Nizamuddin, Tabakat-i-Akbari, in Ell & Daw, V, 412.
[66] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 396, 400.
[67] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 279.

considered the deep meaning, first, of the verse of the Quran:

> "Obey God, and obey the Prophet and those who have authority among you,"

and secondly the genuine Tradition:

> "Surely the man who is dearest to God on the
> day of judgment is the *Imam-i-ādil*;
> Whosoever obeys the Amir, obeys Thee;
> and whosoever rebels against him, rebels against Thee";

and thirdly, of several proofs based on reasoning and testimony;

"And we have agreed that the rank of Sultan-i-Ādil is higher in the eyes of God than the rank of a Mutjahid.

Further we declare that the King of Islam, Amir of the Faithful, Shadow of God in the world, Abu-l-Fath Jalal-uddin Muhammad Akbar, Padshah Ghazi (whose Kingdom God perpetuate) is a most just, a most wise and a most God-fearing King.

Should, therefore in future a religious question come up, regarding which the opinions of the Mutjahids are at variance, and His Majesty in his penetrating understanding and clear wisdom be inclined to adopt, for the benefit of the nation, and as a political expedient, any of the conflicting opinions, which exist on the point, and issue a decree to that effect, we do hereby agree that such a decree shall be binding on us and on the whole nation. Further, we declare that, should His Majesty think fit to issue a new order, we and the Nation shall likewise be bound by it; provided always that such order be not only in accordance with some verse of the Quran, but also of real benefit to the Nation; and further, that any opposition on the part of his subjects to such an order passed by His Majesty shall involve damnation in the world to come, and loss of property and religious privileges in this.

This document has been written with honest intentions, for the glory of God, and the propagation of Islam and signed by us, the principal *Ulama* and lawyers, in the month of Rajab in the year nine hundred and eighty seven (987)."

When presented to Akbar, the document was in the handwriting of Shaikh Mubarak. It bore the signatures and seals of *Makhdum-ul-mulk*, of Shaikh Abdunnabi the *Sadr-us Sadr*, of Kazi Jalaludin of Multan, the *Kazi-I-Kuzat*, of Sadr Jahan, the *Mufti* of the Empire and of Ghazikhan of Badakshan "who stood unrivalled in transcendental sciences."[68]

Whatever the criticisms levelled against the document, it bore the signatures of the most representative and eminent men. Badaoni, however, alleges that after some discussion over the draft "all signed the document, some willingly and the rest against their convictions and though the others signed it against their will but the Shaikh (Mubarak) had added at the bottom that he most willingly signed his name; for this was a matter to which for several years he had been anxiously working forward."[69] Badaoni was obviously referring to the welcome speech Mubarak had made on June 3, 1573, when Akbar returned from the Gujarat campaign in which he had expressed the hope that the Emperor might one day become the spiritual as well as the temporal head of the Kingdom.

The document made the orthodox section uneasy. Men of Badaoni's ilk were apprehensive that it gave an undeniable and final authority to Akbar to open any question of theological character and to render impossible any opposition to his edict. So strong was the feeling amongst the orthodox against this document that when Akbar went that year on his usual pilgrimage to Ajmer, "sensible people smiled" saying that "it was strange that His Majesty should have such a faith in the Khwaja of Ajmer, while he rejected the foundation of everything, our Prophet, from whose skirt hundreds of thousands of saints of the highest degree like the Khwaja had sprung." [70] Qutubuddin Mahomed Khan and Shahbaz Khan being of the same persuasion as Badaoni "staunchly objected" and declined to sign the document.[71]

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[68] Ibid, 278.
[69] Ibid, 279, 280.
[70] Ibid, 280, 281.
[71] Ibid, 282.

Notwithstanding his trenchant remarks against the decree, Badaoni is not clear as to who amongst the signatories gave their signatures under compulsion and in what manner the decree conferred upon Akbar the ultimate authority over religious questions. The reaction of some of the recent writers too is somewhat difficult to understand. Matheson sees in this document "the Magna Charta of his (Akbar's) reign" for now he could give currency and force to his ideas of toleration and could bring into his councils Hindus, Parsis and Christians.[72] This is obviously an incorrect reading of the document for it had no concern with any non-Muslim faith or creed. Smith, on the other hand, saw in it "a momentous innovation which should extend the autocracy of Akbar from the temporal to the spiritual side and make him Pope as well as King" and although "the document purported to have been devised for the propagation of the Muslim faith and to recognise the authority not only of the Koran but of the genuine traditions of the Prophet yet as Badaoni truly observes, the superiority of the Imam was established and opposition was rendered impossible."[73]

These criticisms do not bear scrutiny. In the first place the decree limited the power of Akbar to adopt one of the conflicting opinions given by the jurists. Akbar was not given any authority to give his own interpretation but only to adopt one or the other opinion expressed by the *Mutjahids*. Even where he had the power to issue a new edict, his authority was qualified in two ways; for the order, to acquire a binding character, had to be in conformity with some text of the Koran and it had also to be in the real benefit of the nation. In the second place, its object was, as expressly set out therein, the propagation of Islam.

It might be that Akbar had a hand in the presentation of the Petition. But as even Badaoni admits, it was signed by the highest religious and juridical dignitaries of the State. Akbar had made all efforts to bring about unanimity of opinion among the divines on many vexed questions. They had failed both in fundamentals and de-

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72. Matheson, Akbar, 158.
73. Smith, Akbar, 179, 180; Camb-Hist. of India, IV, 123.

tails and had, on the contrary, disclosed their ignorance and incompetence. There was, therefore, need of an authoritative interpretation of the law and since there was no unanimity among the lawyers there had to be some arbiter to choose a view from among those propounded.

The allegation that some of the signatories had signed the Petition against their will and convictions is based only on the unsupported testimony of Badaoni who was carried away by his resentment against investing this authority in the Emperor. That authority belonged rightly, according to Badaoni, to his class of divines. The signatories could not have been the unwilling tools of Akbar for Jalaluddin was Akbar's nominee to the post of the Chief Kazi whom he had appointed only recently in supersession of Kazi Yakub. *Sadr* Jehan also could not be an unwilling party as he remained in the office long after this Petition. Ghazikhan, a *mansabdar*, continued also in office until his death in 1584.

The theologians were angry because the decree took away "their powers to persecute others for their religious opinions". Such a power could no longer be entrusted to them as Akbar had found them to be not only ignorant but corrupt. Both Abdunnabi and Mulla Abdullah were found to have persecuted innocent men and misused the powers vested in them.

Badaoni's charges are not only contradictory but they cannot bear analysis. His opposition was mainly due to his fanatical hatred of all non-Sunnis, his intense dislike of the liberal policy of Akbar, his ineradicable jealousy of Shaikh Mubarak and his two famous sons and his resentment over the disappearance of the old order.

Another set of critics were the Jesuits though they opposed it for a different reason. The liberal policy of tolerance to which they and their order, as bigoted as the *Ullemas*, were not accustomed to, made them think for a while that Akbar would be an easy prey to their missionary zeal. Fr. Monserrate's commentary, uncritically accepted by both Smith and Haig, was in the nature of a report to his superiors. He had to convince them that their efforts to convert Akbar would have borne fruit but for his shifting nature. Fr.

Monserrate clearly misunderstood the sympathy with which Akbar heard the Jesuits in his zeal to know their doctrines. His hearty welcome to them, his frank partiality towards them in the debates in the *Ibadatkhana* made them believe that he was anti-Muslim.

The truth was that the various innovations that Akbar was making, made him, as is the case with every reformer, a victim of calumny at the hands of vested interests who were likely to suffer. These vested interests instigated a mutiny amongst the military officers in Bengal and Bihar. The mutiny was essentially a protest against too strict an administration of Shah Mansur and Mussafar Khan under which their allowances were reduced but the cry of saving the true faith was too handy a weapon to be missed.[74]

Mulla Mahomed Yazdi had been appointed in 1579 the Kazi of Jaunpur. As soon as he went there he issued a *Fatwa* declaring that it was the religious duty of every true Muslim to rebel against the Emperor. The *Fatwa* was at once seized upon as a good battle-cry by disgruntled officers in Bengal and Bihar. The consequences of that *Fatwa* were serious but they also show how great was the influence of the Mullas and the *Ullemas* still.

For a time even Akbar had to bow down to the storm. He removed at least temporarily Shah Mansur from the office of Prime Minister. But when the storm subsided he acted with vigour. Many of the Mullas, including Kazi Yazdi, suspected of disloyalty, were put to death in one manner or the other. The rest were transferred to distant places.[75]

In 1578-1579 the discussions in the *Ibadatkhana* continued with increasing bitterness. The *Ullemas* were divided into two groups, one under Mulla Abdullah and the other under Shaikh Abdunnabi, each denouncing the opinions of the other as heretical. The Emperor naturally thought that the truth must therefore be sought outside the limited circle of these doctors. The Court thereafter gradually became the assemblage of leaders from every creed and sect, each one of whom left some impression on the sympathetic mind of the Emperor.

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[74] Sri Ram Sharma, Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors, 41 46. 51, 55.

[75] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 284; Nizamuddin, Tabakat-i-Akbari in Ell & Daw, V. 419; A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 329.

IV

The 16th century witnessed a great renaissance in Hindu literature and art and an equally great religious revival, both made possible by the tolerant and liberal policy of the Emperor. The *Bhakti* cult in particular acquired a firm hold on the Hindu mind.

Long before the Muslim invasions of India started, the struggle between Brahminism on the one hand and Buddhism and Jainism on the other hand had ended. Brahminism had fully succeeded in establishing once again its supremacy. Mainly responsible for this triumph were Udayana and Shankaracharya; the latter with his dialectical brilliance had vanquished many an opponent in debates. Buddhism practically disappeared from India owing to Shankara's crusades and though Jainism remained, it ceased to aspire to be the national religion.

Shankara presents a unique combination of two qualities generally found separated. There are those who ascend to the heights of physical discipline and intellectual analysis and succeed in communing with the Infinite. Others reach the same heights through love, compassion and faith. But it is not given to many to unite these two qualities of knowledge and devotion in the same existence or body. Shankara was one of the rare spirits of the union of the abstract and the concrete.

In his commentaries on the Brahma-Sutras, the Upanishads and Bhagwad-Gita containing the most meticulous analysis of the phenomenon of matter and spirit, evil and good, duality and oneness he propounded the *Advaita* doctrine which is one of the profoundest explanations of the problems of human life. A human being is secure so long as he possesses the awareness that he is *Brahman* and the creation around him is the creation of the mind, *maya-kalpita* and has therefore no separate existence. But besides his commentaries, Shankara produced passionate, lyrical *Stotras* showing love and devotion as steps leading to the heights where the ultimate Truth is enthroned that nothing exists apart from *Brahman* or the Infinite Soul and that all human conflicts are due to *Maya*, or illusion, which makes for separateness where no such separateness exists. Although Shankara thus stressed the importance of *Bhakti* as a means to purify the heart, his principal theme was that it is knowledge through introspection and passionless thought which leads one to ultimate salvation and enlightenment.

But Shankara's doctrine of *Adavaita* and *Maya* was too abstract and severe a doctrine for the general masses to comprehend. It did not meet their requirement for someone on whom they could satisfy their earthly love.

Even before Shankara's rise, the cult of *Bhakti* had caught the imagination of the people in the South through the twelve Vaishnava saints known as Alvars who praised the worship of *Parabrahman* in the form of Vasudeva. *Bhagavata Purana* composed between 600-800 A.D. had already portrayed the figure of Shri Krishna in human form as the centre for the love of the devotee not as an Incarnation only but as God himself. This work brought about a radical change in the doctrine of Vedanta by shifting the emphasis from knowledge to complete attachment and surrender to Shri Krishna.

The Alvars were followed by the *Acharyas* who gave the *Bhakti* cult a metaphysical foundation. Yamunacharya in the eleventh century propounded the theory of *Prapatti*, surrender to God. His great-grandson Ramanuja in the next century elevated it to the level of a monotheistic religion. In his commentaries on the Upanishads, the Gita and the Vyasa Sutras he propounded the doctrine of *Visishtadvaita* or qualified monism according to which the Universe is the body of God and His Spirit animating the Universe is the essence of man. Individual souls are not essentially one with the Supreme Being though they all arise from Him as sparks from fire. The Supreme Being is not attributeless but is *Saguna*, possessing qualities of goodness and beauty in an infinite degree.

ability to see God. He condemned idol-worship, castes, rituals and other outer practices of Hinduism, holding that all mankind is one family and God is the supreme head of it. He is one of the few Hindu saints who speaks the language of Koran and quotes approvingly many of its teachings condemning at the same time some of the practices and customs followed by the Muslims. No wonder orthodoxy both Hindu and Muslim disliked him and persecuted him.

The *Bhakti* impulse spread from Vrindavan into Gujarat and Rajputana in the sixteenth century. Mirabai blossomed forth from Mewar and with her exquisite lyrics on love and devotion of Krishna captivated the hearts of millions. Her *guru*, Raidas, had already prepared the background for her in Rajputana. In Saurashtra was born Narsinha Mehta, acknowledged as the first great poet in modern Gujarati, who composed short captivating devotional songs which are still sung in thousands of homes. Both have *Bhakti* and love of Shri Krishna as the main theme of their poetry. Their range therefore is limited. But the intensity of their passion for God, their absolute surrender to Him and the melody of their songs seized the hearts of all who heard or sang them.

In the Deccan there were Namadeva and Dynanoba, the two Maratha saints who besides composing songs in Marathi also wrote in Hindi.[76]

The leaders of *Bhakti* cult began to show novel traits. Their thoughts covered wider horizons and were no longer confined to Hindu works. The works of Namdeva, Kabir and Nanak clearly show the impress of Islam. They condemned caste, idolatry and polytheism and pleaded that God was one, of Hindus and Muslims, of high and low. On the other hand there were at least a few among the Muslims whom Hinduism did not leave unimpressed. Hussaini Shah (1452-1478) in Bengal, tried for instance, to found a new

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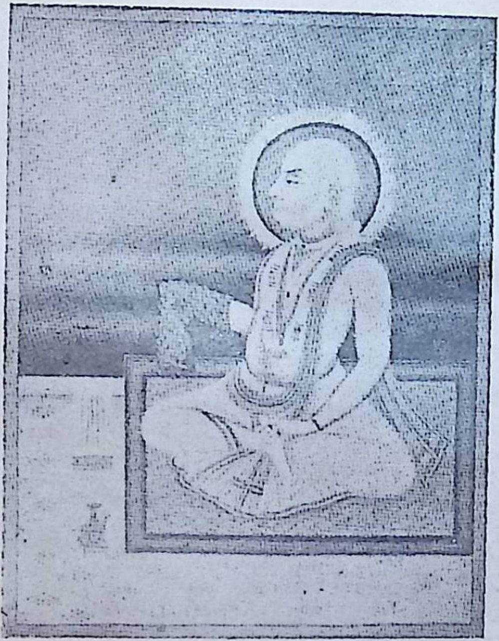
[76] For the history of Bhakti cult I am indebted to Dr. Ishwari Prasad's chapter in his *Mediaeval India*, 502 and onwards and Indian Inheritance, Vol. I, published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.



SHRI VITTHALESHVARA

religious creed to which he gave the significant name of *Satapir*.

During this period there grew up yet another branch of Vaishnavism of which Vallabhacharya (1479-1530A.D.) was the founder and the most prominent exponent. From his early age he showed signs of great genius and soon came to be regarded as a prodigy of learning. Finishing his education, he too, like the other teachers, went on preaching tours. Going to the Court of Krishna Deva Raya of Vijaynagar he vanquished the Chief proponents of Shaivism and then travelled to Mathura, Vrindavan and other holy places finally settling down in Benaras. There he composed his famous *Bhagwat Tika Subodhini* and other works.

His doctrine was pure monism according to which there is no distinction between the Supreme Being and the individual soul. The individual soul, however, suffers in bondage because of delusion which can be removed by pure and utter love for and the infinite greatness of Lord Krishna. The keynote of his preachings was non-attachment to worldly pleasures and passions, self-renunciation and full dedication of one's life in the devotion of the Lord.

Vallabhacharya died in 1530-1531 leaving two sons Gopinath and Vitthaleshvara. Gopinath and his son Purushottam died between 1533 and 1543. Vitthaleshvara then became the recognised head of the *sampradaya* started by his great father. In the early years of his life, Vitthaleshvara lived at Adel where he spent much of his time in the pursuit of joy and mirth. Damodardas, one of the chief followers of Vallabhacharya however induced him to take his responsibilities seriously and give up his flippant ways. There is a reference to one Damodar Bhatt in *Ain-i-Akbari* as a learned man during Akbar's time who "perceived the mysteries of the external and internal worlds." It is not unreasonable to suppose that it was this same Damodardas whose fame had perhaps reached the ears of Akbar.

From 1543-1544 and onwards Vitthaleshvara started his proselytizing activities and for that purpose went on several tours. Like Vallabhacharya he also visited Gujarat and Dwarka on six occasions between 1544 and 1582. There with the help of Nagaji Bhatt, a sathodra Brahmin, Bhaila Kothari of Asarva near Ahmedabad, Rana Vyas of Sidhpur and Jiva Prakash of Cambay he attracted a large number of persons towards the *Sampradaya*. In 1559-1560 he visited Jagannath Puri where he came in contact with the direct disciples of Chaitanya. Under their influence he composed *Swaminyashtaka*, *Swaministotra* and other *stotras* which extolled Radha the eternal consort of Shri Krishna. His other works like *Krishnapremamrita* and *Shringararasamandana* also seem to have been written under Chaitanya's influence.

From Jagannath Puri he returned to Adel but shifted soon to Bandhu Fort of Raja Ramchand who welcomed him in his kingdom. It was here that the celebrated musician Tansen met Vitthaleshvara. His stay here was short for he soon went with his family to Gada, near Jubbulpore where Rani Durgavati was then ruling. She was intensely religious and was a patron of brahmins. Vitthaleshvara founded an *Ashram* near her capital. So impressed was Rani Durgavati with Vitthaleshvara's saintly character, his learning and solemn devotion of Krishna that she used to frequent his *Ashram* and often beseeched him to make her territory his permanent residence. Vitthaleshvara lived here for three years. During his stay here Birbal, then known as Brahmadas, came in contact with Vitthaleshvara who blessed him with a gift of his own waistcoat. From this time onwards, Birbal's relations with Vitthaleshvara and his eldest son and successor Girdharlalji were intimate and cordial. Later on, when disputes arose between Vitthaleshvara and the followers of Chaitanya as regards the rights over the shrine of Shri Nathaji at Govardhan mountain, it was Birbal who helped Vitthaleshvara to obtain possession of it. In or about 1563 he composed his famous *Vidvanmandana* which established his reputation as an accomplished scholar and writer.

When it became known that Akbar intended to invade Gada, Vitthaleshvara decided to move to Mathura. Rani Durgavati had seven houses built for him there which became known as *Satgara*. Though these houses are no longer extant, their site is still known as *Satgara*. When Vitthaleshvara moved from Gada in 1567 the Rani sent her minister Adhar with a large escort to accompany him as far as Mathura.

Vitthaleshvara, however, preferred the quietness of Gokul and there he made his permanent residence leaving Mathura which was then subject to the dominant Muslim influence.

After he established himself at Gokul his fame as a preacher and saint spread far and wide. In 1576-1577 Akbar invited Vitthaleshvara for an elucidation of the nature of the Supreme Being. So gratified was the Emperor with his discourse that he requested the Acharya to ask for a gift. To secure a permanent place for his deity, Vitthaleshvara asked for Gokul to be bestowed on him as Inam lands. The grant was made. The *Farman* dated September 13, 1577 recites :—

> "As Vithaldas, indisputably a prayer-offerer (for our well-being), is a resident of the *Kasba* (town) of Gokul, it is meet that no one out of the servants of the world protecting Court, and others besides them, should molest the above mentioned indisputable prayer-offerer (well-wisher), his relatives and retainers, and by no manner of means should demand or call for anything from them. They must allow him to live in his place and home, easy at heart, so that he might engage himself in praying for our daily increasing fortune and the perpetuity of our eternally allied dignity....................."[77]

The *Farman* stipulated the lands as immune from any taxes or imposts. The personal immunity granted to the recipient from any molestation by any of the Imperial officers is significant.

Four years later Akbar bestowed on him yet another grant by a *Farman* dated March 3, 1581. The cows of Vitthaleshvara "wherever they are" were to be allowed to graze without let or hindrance whether in 'Khalsa or Jagir' lands.[78] A few months later, on October 8, 1581, Akbar's mother

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77. K. M. Jhaveri, Imperial Farmans, Farman No. 1.
78. Ibid, Farman No. 2.

Hamida Banu Begum repeated the same grant.[79] Though her grant is couched in the same terms its effect was to enhance the esteem in which the Acharya was held not only in the Court but also by the members of the royal family. In 1588 Mirza Abdur Rahim, *Khan Khanan* issued a *Farman* confirming the grazing rights of the temple at Govardhan in Savi and other villages. It recited that these villages "have been purposely given in grant."[80] In 1583 Akbar granted in perpetuity the village of Jatipur, tax-free, directing the officers, jagirdars and landholders, present and future, not to "molest and harass him with the demands of forbidden imposts or civil levies or Imperial taxes or land tax or imposts on manufacture or other extraordinary contributions or of the produce of the trees there." Since the grant was perpetual and hereditary they were also ordained not to "demand a renewed *Farman* or *Parwana*'[81]. By yet another order dated May 26, 1593 bearing the seal of Abul Fazl and issued from Lahore the Emperor forbade the killing of peacocks and hunting of any kind in the parganas of Mathura, Sahar, Mangotah and Od.[82] In June 1593 Akbar confirmed for the benefit of Shri Nathji the endowment of Gokul which this time included also the ferry of Jamuna free from all taxes and levies.[83]

It was at Gokul that Vitthaleshvara completed the elaborate code of rituals of *Sevamarga*.

Todermal, Birbal and Rai Purshottam fell deeply under his influence. In 1572 Todermal visited the Acharya at Gokul to obtain blessings before starting on his expedition against Daud in Bihar. The Acharya presented him with a *pitambar* which Todermal tied around his head. Even Akbar could not resist the intense devotion which the followers of his *sampradaya* bestowed on the Acharya. The Emperor visited Gokul and Vitthaleshvara allowed him the *darshan* of his beloved Shri Nathji.

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79. Ibid, Farman No. 3
80. Ibid, Farman No. 3-a.
81. Ibid, Farman No. 4.
82. Ibid, Farman No. 4-a.
83. Ibid, Farman No. 5.

It was during his tenure as the Acharya that *Pushtimarga* grew in all its vigour. Under his guidance the country experienced an intense wave of Shri Krishna worship. His contribution was the largest in making aesthetics an essential part of Krishna worship.

Himself a painter of no mean merit and a master musician, knowing both the theory and practice of Hindi music, he composed a number of songs dedicated to Shri Krishna. His *Ashtapadi* can, in the opinion of critics, compare favourably with the finest verses of Jayadeva in *Gita Govinda*. Govindswami, a great musician of the time, was appointed by him as his chief *Kirtankara* at Gokul. His son Raghunathji speaks of the Acharya as *Gitsangitsagar*.[84]

There is reason to think that Akbar was sincerely impressed with the instructions he received from several Hindu teachers. Apart from his own desire to know the Hindu tenets, there were around him such staunch Hindus as Todermal, Bhagwandas, Mansingh, Rai Purshottam and others. Under their influence, he even adopted some of the Hindu rites. "On the festival of the eighth day after the Sun's entering Virgo in this year (A.H. 988, A. D. 1580) he came forth to the Public Audience Chamber with his forehead marked like a Hindu and he had jewelled strings tied on his wrists by brahmans by way of a blessing."[85] A brahmin scholar, Purshottam, was commissioned to prepare a vocabulary in Sanskrit.

Badaoni, who witnessed these changes with disapproval, observes that even to touch beef came to be regarded a defiling. The King, he writes, was from his youth in the company of "Hindu libertines" and had learnt from them to look upon the cow as something holy. Besides he "was subject to the influence of the numerous Hindu princesses of the harem, who had gained so great an ascendency over him, as to make him forswear beef, garlic, onions and the wearing of a beard, which things His Majesty still avoids."[86]

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[84] For the life of Vitthaleshvara see the sketch of his career by Mr. Telivala in the appendix to Jhaveri's *Imperial Farmans*.

[85] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Blochmann, I, 184.

[86] Ibid, 193.

Akbar did not confine his wide sympathies to Hindus alone. In 1573 he had invited Dastur Meherjee Rana, the leading Mohed of Navsari to come to Court. Whether he came then or later on, he certainly did take part in the discussions in the *Ibadatkhana* in 1578 and returned home in 1579.[87] In all probability Akbar found more solace in the doctrines of Zoroastrianism than in any other religious creed which he examined. The close connection with Persia maintained by his family, his open preference for the Persians to the Uzbegs and the Chagatai officers predisposed him to look favourably on this creed of which the principal attraction for him was its origin in Persia. He sent a large amount of money to Persia to bring Ardoshir Kermani, a leading Zoroastrian scholar, to Fathpur for the compilation of a great lexicon known as *Farhang-i-Jahangiri*, which was begun in Akbar's time but was completed during Jahangir's reign in 1608.[88]

The Emperor did not stop with a mere metaphysical leaning towards the creed but he even practised some of its rites. He openly conducted prayers in adoration of the Sun in the morning, noon, evening and midnight declaring that "a special grace proceeds from the Sun in favour of Kings and for this reason they pray and consider it a worship of the Almighty, but the short-sighted are scandalized."[89] The Sunni bigots charged him with the deification of the Sun and the introduction of fire-worship. There is no doubt that Meherjee Rana wielded much the same, if not greater, influence over him as Fr. Acquaviva. Akbar's veneration for fire once led him to order a poor lamplighter in the Palace to be thrown down from the roof for showing disrespect to the fire and for his contumacy in sleeping near a sacred lamp.[90] A sacred fire, according to the Zoroastrian rites, was started in the Palace and was handed over to the charge of Abul Fazl. From the early part of 1580 Akbar started the practice of prostrating himself in public before the Sun and the fire.

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[87] Smith, Akbar, 163; Commissariat, History of Gujarat, II, 224.

[88] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Blochmann, I, 210; Commissariat, History of Gujarat. II, 226.

[89] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Jarrett, III, 388, 393.

[90] Banerjee & Hayland, The Commentary of Fr. Monserrate, Introduction, IV.

When lamps were lighted in the evening, the entire Court rose in respect. "To light a candle" he was wont to say "is to commemorate the rising of the Sun. To whomsover the Sun sets, what other remedy hath he but this. ?"[91]

The cult of Sun worship found a staunch supporter in Birbal, himself a sun-worshipper for long, though from the Hindu point of view. Besides, it fitted well with the sacred *homs* daily performed by the Rajputanis in the harem.

But all this did not mean that Akbar either changed his faith or adopted Zoroastrianism. Jahangir testifies that "the professors of various faiths had room in the broad expanse of his incomparable sway..............As in the wide expanse of the Divine compassion, there is room for all classes and the followers of all creeds, so on the principle that the shadow must have the same properties as the light, in his dominion,.........there was room for the professors of opposite religions, and for beliefs good and bad, and the road to altercation was closed."[92]

The tolerant ruler also venerated Sikhism and restrained any attempt to persecute the Sikhs by his liberal attitude towards their *gurus*. He visited Guru Amar Das (1552-1574) at Govindwal, dined with him and graciously accepted a robe of honour.The remission of Pilgrims Tax in 1563 was perhaps due to a request made by Guru Amar Das. His successor, Guru Ramdas, had also a fair amount of influence on Akbar. He was granted a jagir where he built a tank and called it Amritsar which has since developed into a focal point of Sikhism. The next *Guru* Arjun (1581-1606) compiled the *Granth Sahib*. A complaint was made to the Emperor that there were derogatory references in the *Granth* to the prophet and the Hindu incarnations. Akbar summoned Bhai Budha and Guru Das and after listening to some portions of the *Granth Sahib* gave his verdict. "Excepting love and devotion to God, I so far find neither praise nor blame to anyone in this *Granth*. It is a volume worthy of reverence."[93]

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[91] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Jarrett, III, 393.

[92] Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Tr. Rogers & Beveridge, I, 37.

[93] Banerjee & Hayland, The Commentary of Fr. Monserrate, Introduction V, VII.

The Jain teachers exercised no less an influence on the Emperor. Six Jain Acharyas, Hiravijayaji Suri, Shantichandra, Vijayasen, and Bhanuchandra of Swetambar sect and Jinachandra of Kharatara sect visited the Court from time to time. From 1582 until Akbar's death, one or the other of these teachers was always at the Court. These contacts considerably affected the policy of the Emperor "whose successive orders in support of the Jain doctrine of *Ahimsa*, and against the destruction of animal life, remind us of the Rock-Edicts on similar lines published eighteen hundred years before him by the great Buddhist Emperor Asoka."[94]

In 1582 soon after his return from Kabul expedition, Akbar ordered Shihabuddin Ahmed Khan, then the Viceroy of Gujarat, to send Hiravijaya Suri of whose severe penances, holiness and learning he had heard.[95] Hiravijaya and a few of his disciples proceeded on foot from village to village preaching as they went and reached Fathpur on June 7, 1583. The famous Suri visited Abul Fazl first and was then introduced to Akbar who was profoundly struck by his learned discourse. The Jain leader remained in constant touch with Akbar for about two years until his departure from the Court in 1585.

Akbar bestowed on the Suri the title of *Jagat-Guru* or world-teacher and pressed him to ask a boon. The Suri had no personal favours to ask but this was an opportunity to obtain some concessions for his followers which he had hoped for when he started on his journey to the capital. In 1584 the Emperor at his request issued *Farmans* to his officials in the six provinces where the Jains were living prohibiting animal slaughter for twelve days during the auspicious *Paryushana* festival of the Jains. Akbar also abolished the *Jiziya* and the *Mundaka* (pilgrim) taxes levied in Gujarat on the Hindus.

So impressed was the Emperor with the monastic vows of Hiravijaya that though the Jain leader was no longer at the Court, Akbar issued a *Farman* dated November 16, 1590 addressed to Mirza Aziz Koka then the Viceroy of Gujarat directing him to see that no one trespassed into Jain *Upashrayas* or molested the Jain community. The *Farman* also directed that if any charitable person desired to repair or rebuild a Jain temple no one should put any hindrance. Another *Farman* followed in 1592 addressed to officers in Malwa, Agra, Lahore, Multan and Ahmedabad bestowing on Hiravijaya, as the supreme representative of the Jain community, the hills of Siddhachal, Girnar, Taranga, Keshrinath and Abu in Gujarat and also the five hills of Rajgir and Parswanath in Bengal together with the temples and *Kothis* at the foot of these hills and all places of pilgrimage of the Jain Swetambar sect so that no one might kill any animal on these hills or in the vicinity of these temples.

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[94] Commissariat, History of Gujarat, II, 229.
[95] Smith, Akbar, 166.

Shantichandra stayed at the Court until 1587 and wrote a poem in Sanskrit on the good deeds of the Emperor called '*Kriparasa-kos*'. Bhanuchandra remained with Akbar right until 1605. An inscription in Prakrit on the porch of Adishwar temple on the Satrunjaya hill at Palitana dated 1593-1594 records the achievements of Hiravijaya while he was at the Imperial headquarters. There is no doubt that it was under the influence of this great Jain leader that Akbar renounced his favourite sport of hunting to which he was deeply attached ever since his childhood and gave up non-vegetarian food. "Of the austerities practised by my revered father," wrote Jahangir, "one was the non-eating the flesh of animals. During three months of the year he ate meat, and for the remaining nine contented himself with Sufi food and was no way pleased with the slaughter of animals. On many days and in many months this was forbidden to the people."[96]

Akbar extended his favours equally to the leaders of the Kharatara sect also. In 1591 he invited Jinachandra Suri, the head of this order to come to the Court through Karamchand, a favourite courtier and a lay member of this sect. In 1593 the Emperor conferred on Jinachandra the title of *Yuga-Pradhan*, the lord of the age, and a *Farman* was issued forbidding animal slaughter for seven days every year in the month of Ashad. An inscription in a temple on Shatrunjaya

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96. Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Tr. Rogers & Beveridge, I, 45.

hill confirms the grant of this title and the concession made by this *Farman*.

The presence of the Jesuits at the Court excited controversy and even resentment. Their vows of non-possession, poverty and celibacy impressed the Emperor deeply. As early as 1578 Akbar had invited Francis Julian Pereira, the Vicar-general at Satgaon in Bengal to learn about Christianity. Pereira was pious but not learned. He acquainted Akbar with the rudiments of Christianity but requested him to send for men more learned than him from Goa. Thus resulted the first Jesuit mission.

In 1579 Akbar wrote to Louis des Athaide, the Portuguese Viceroy at Goa and the Society of Jesuits there to send two priests.[97] The invitation was accepted by Archbishop Henry of Tenora in a Council of Bishops and the decision to send the mission was communicated to the Superior of the Society of Jesus. Rudolf Acquaviva was appointed the head of the mission and was given two assistants, Fr. Antonio Monserrate and Francis Henriquez, a Persian convert to Christianity who was to act as an interpreter. The mission came to Daman and from there travelled to Bulsar, Navsari and to Surat. There they halted for a month as the Imperial emissary, who had gone to Goa with the letter of Akbar, would not resume the journey before the auspicious day. Taking advantage of this break in the journey, the Fathers started learning Persian in Surat. On January 24, 1580, the mission left Surat eager in their missionary zeal to reach the capital as quickly as possible. The unexpected invitation and the overcordial language of the royal letter had raised extravagant hopes in the authorities at Goa that Akbar might accept their faith.[98]

In the first interview with the Fathers in February 1580, Akbar and his sons donned Portuguese dress probably to please the guests.The Fathers presented an atlas which the Archbishop of Goa had sent. In return Akbar presented 800 pieces of gold. The Fathers politely declined to accept them as being against their vow of poverty. The warm reception by the Emperor encouraged the Fathers to hope for an easy and speedy fulfilment of their mission to convert so great a sovereign. Pereira was still there. The Fathers reported to him that the King had shown reverence for Christ and the Virgin, surprise at the Christian tenet of monogamy, admiration for the Fathers' vow of celibacy but lack of understanding of the doctrine of trinity. They even reported that Akbar considered the Prophet an impostor. What made them optimistic was that Akbar started keeping in his dining Hall pictures of Christ and the Virgin together with those of Moses and the Prophet.[99]

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[97] See Smith, Akbar, 169 where the letter as translated in English is reproduced.

[98] Banerjee & Hayland, Commentary of Fr. Monserrate, 4, 5, 11.

On March 3, 1580 Akbar met the Fathers in the private Audience Chamber. They presented him with a beautifully bound copy of the Royal Polyglot Bible of Plantyn printed in 1569-1572 for Philip II of Spain.[100] In the presence of his nobles, Akbar accepted each of the seven volumes taking off his turban and placing each of them on his head and reverently kissing them. He also visited the private Chapel put up by the Fathers in the quarters given to them in the Palace. Murad then only 10 years old and some of the sons of the nobles were placed in charge of Monserrate for instruction.[101]

That very night a debate took place in the *Ibadatkhana* on the rival merits of the Koran and the Gospel between the Fathers and the Mullas. "The Mullas were worsened", says Monserrate, "and thrown into confusion by observing the look on the King's face. They retired from the debate and finally became entirely silent."[102] During the debate the Fathers, especially Monserrate, used intemperate language about Islam and though Akbar admired their arguments he had to advise them to be moderate. "We will be cautious", they said "as regards the Mussalman religious leaders, as you advise, not because we are afraid of them for ourselves, but because we wish to obey you." The Emperor, nonetheless, was pleased with their knowledge of the Koran, a Latin translation of which they had instructed themselves with. The Fathers, besides, had an advantage over their opponents for they worked in unison and as a team while the Mullas were not of one mind and Akbar soon got restless and impatient with their contradictory opinions.[103]

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[99] Banerjee & Hayland, Commentary of Fr. Monserrate, 28, 29.
[100] Smith, Akbar, 175.
[101] Banerjee & Hayland, Commentary of Fr. Monserrate, 52.
[102] Ibid, 37.

The third discussion found the Mullas in a desperate mood. Excitement ran high. Orthodoxy was fighting with its back to the wall for its very existence. When discomfited with arguments, the Mullas appealed for an ordeal. "Let us put it to the test," they said, "which Holy Book is true. Let a pyre be constructed and kindled. Then let one of you carrying the Gospel and one likewise of us carrying the *syndogma* ascend the burning pyre." "The book which comes out safely together with its bearer shall be judged true." Akbar urged the Fathers to accept the challenge but the Fathers said that there was no need for miraculous ordeals to demonstrate the truth about Christianity.

As usual, there are different versions of this incident. Monserrate says that Acquaviva explained to Akbar that such ordeals were forbidden by their faith. But Akbar was disappointed at the refusal of the Fathers to accept the challenge and at last said: "God forbid that I should have summoned you hither in order that you might suffer any calamity. But there is in my Court a certain religious preceptor who boasts that he is a holy man though indeed he is befouled with many and great crimes and who has written a new original commentary on Alcoranus (Koran). I am desirous of punishing him and wish to use your help in the matter." Acquaviva still refused saying that the priests were forbidden to kill a man or to make attempts to bring about a man's execution or death.[104] According to Badaoni it was Shaikh Qutubuddin of Jalesar who in this debate suggested the ordeal. The fire was made and the Shaikh invited one of the Fathers, pulling his coat, to enter into the fire. The Fathers declined to go through the ordeal. The

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103. Ibid, 38, 39.
104. Ibid, 39-43.

Emperor resented this triumph of the Shaikh and transferred him to far-off Bakkar. [105]

The language in which the Fathers spoke of the Prophet was so bitter and unpleasant that it was only Akbar's protection that saved them. It is fully reflected in a letter written by Acquaviva dated December 10, 1580.[106]

The Fathers had persuaded themselves that Akbar had made up his mind to be converted. Acquaviva even suggested to Akbar to prepare himself by repentance for his past sins, by agreeing to keep only one wife, the first in marriage and by fasting and giving alms. He even recommended that Akbar should decide upon a plan by which he could become a Christian without causing an upheaval or risking his person. Akbar was evasive. Even if what Monserrate wrote were true, he had only said: "These things are in the hand of God who grants to those who ask plain paths from which they cannot stray." Monserrate, however, goes further and adds that Akbar told them that if there was no other way of his becoming a Christian without rousing a tumult he would pretend that he was going to Mecca for a pilgrimage and would go instead to Goa and get baptized.[107]

The version of Monserrate can scarcely be accepted. It is not possible that Akbar could have told the Fathers so plainly that he intended to change his faith. In fact the complaint of these Jesuits was that he never confided his inner thoughts to any one and that he made up his mind on all questions on his own. Akbar was too practical and realistic to be oblivious of the fact that a change of religion would at once bring about a revolution in the country and jeopardise the Empire which he had built up at great hazards and so assiduously.

Nevertheless Akbar was vastly impressed with the zeal of Fr. Acquaviva, his fearless conduct and single-mindedness of purpose. He even bore patiently the rebuke the Jesuit

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105. Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 308.
106. For the letter see Smith, Akbar, 175.
107. Banerjee & Hayland, The Commentary of Fr. Monserrate, 45, 47, 48.

administered to him in public for even showing by his presence an indirect approbation of the custom of *Sati*, for his partronage of animal fights and for Salim and Danial being instructed by the orthodox Muslim teachers. In the privacy of his chambers, the Emperor cast away all his royal dignity, walked with his arm around Acquaviva's shoulders and gave him free access to his inner compartments. [108]

Acquaviva had by this time acquired sufficient proficiency in Persian language and the Muslim scriptures from Abul Fazl. That enhanced his reputation in the Court circles and gave him the advantage of using material from Muslim works against the contentions of the Mullas. To add to their anger, Akbar openly took the side of the Jesuits. He became their advocate, umpire and friendly arbiter and Abul Fazl aided and abetted him. [109] Badaoni was watching these debates daily and noted the change that was now marked in the Emperor. Full of indignation at the assaults made so mercilessly on the old order to which his conservative mind was attached, he wrote of the Jesuits: "And the attributes of the accursed anti-Christ and his qualities were ascribed by those accursed men (the Fathers) to his Lordship The Best of the Prophets." [110]

From these exciting discussions, Akbar was rudely shaken by the serious rebellion in Bengal and Bihar followed by the attempt by his brother Mahomed Hakim to invade India. Both were found to have been engineered by some of the leading members of the orthodox section. His own Prime Minister Shah Mansur was found to have been deeply involved in the conspiracy.

In 1582 Akbar returned from Kabul triumphantly, at the zenith of his power and an absolute master of his vast realm. He proposed that one of the three Fathers should accompany his two envoys to King Philip II. He gave them a letter addressed to the Spanish King. Though the letter

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[108] Ibid, 60, 64.
[109] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 268.
[110] Banerjee & Hayland, Commentary of Fr. Monserrate 166, 171, 174.

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was ostensibly for a friendly treaty, the real object was to forge an alliance against the Turks.[111]

In the meantime a sudden turn took place in the relations between the Mughals and the Portuguese. Qutubuddin, the Governor of Broach and Shiabuddin Ahmed Khan, the Governor of Gujarat suddenly attacked Daman. The Portuguese managed to repulse the attack with their superior artillery but the Jesuits lost their faith in Akbar. Faced with the news of this attack by the Fathers, Akbar denied any previous knowledge. He told them, however, that since both these officers were experienced statesmen and had presumably undertaken the aggression in his interest he would not reprimand them.[112] The Jesuits, in spite of Akbar's denial, suspected that he had connived at the attack on Daman. The reason for the aggression was the harassment and indignity that the Haj Pilgrims were constantly subjected to by the Portuguese authorities. The feeling of resentment against the Portuguese had become acute in Akbar after the return of Gulbadan and Sultana Begum from their pilgrimage.

The attack on Daman led to the recall of the mission and yet the Jesuit authorities left the question of return to the discretion of the Fathers. There was still some hope of the King's conversion. The idea of the embassy to Spain also was not given up. The Fathers decided that Monserrate should accompany Akbar's envoys while Acquaviva would remain at the Court and take over Murad's education.[113]

Whatever high hopes the Fathers may have indulged in, their mission had failed. In spite of the cordiality and even partiality that Akbar had shown them, his tolerant mind reacted against them for he found them as narrow-minded and fanatical as the Mullas. In 1583 his heart turned more than ever towards Dastur Mehervanji Rana, attracted by the very simplicity of the dogma that he preached and to a lesser extent towards Birbal. The Emperor continued to venerate the Sun and the sacred fire. [114] He even caused a wooden structure to be erected on the highest point of the roof of the Palace and from there he watched daily the glory of the rising Sun.

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[111] Ibid, 166, 171, 174.
[112] Ibid, 171-174.
[113] Ibid, 184.

The Fathers suspected that the debates held by Akbar were intended in truth to enable him to found a new religion of his own. Monserrate lost all hopes of converting Akbar. The report he made to his superior was of one in despair : "It may be suspected that Jalal-ud-din (Akbar) was moved to summon the Christian priests, not by any divine inspiration, but by a certain curiosity, and excessive eagerness to hear some new thing or a design to devise something novel for the destruction of souls."[115] Rudolf Acquaviva also had grown "weary of Akbar's fickleness for he changed himself into more numerous shapes even than Proteus." The Provincial of Goa wrote letters asking him to return. In 1583 Acquaviva returned to Goa from where he was sent to Salsette for missionary work. An angry mob there murdered him and he died a martyr's death, a thing he perhaps desired most. [116]

Thus ended the first Jesuit mission. The Fathers had mistaken Akbar's thirst for knowledge of the Christian doctrine as his lack of faith in his forefathers' religion, his tolerance for other creeds as shiftings of his moods and his hospitality towards them as hostility towards Islam. He was too much of a scientist in religion for men like these Jesuits who were confined within the walls of strait-laced sectarianism. [117]

By 1583 the Muslim orthodoxy was shattered. Akbar was free from its shackles just as twenty years before he had become free from the shackles of the harem and had become master of his own.

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[114] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 268.
[115] Quoted in Smith, Akbar, 207.
[116] Baneriee & Hayland, Commentary of Fr. Monserrate, 196.
[117] Dr. P. Saran, Socio-Religious Background at the Advent of Akbar. A new approach in the Journal of the U.P. His. Soc. Vol. XIX. 130.

CHAPTER XI

TWO REBELLIONS

It is sometimes alleged that Akbar's object in inviting the Jesuit missions to his court was not honest when he regarded the Portuguese as his enemies. It is true that their presence on the West Coast could not have been welcome to him. Nevertheless he had been sincere and genuine in his feelings towards the Jesuits. His reception of the Christian Fathers had been cordial and favours shown to them were open. His entrusting Prince Murad and the sons of some of the amirs to Monserrate for instruction viewed against the intemperate language which the Fathers used against Islam and even against the Prophet was bound to create violent hostility against him. By these open avowals Akbar was indeed playing with fire.

Those opposed to his religious reforms spread rumours that he was about to embrace Christianity and abandon his ancestors' faith. There was a feeling of uneasiness even in the harem. It was not any the less considerable merely because it was not openly voiced.

Wherever these rumours went, the orthodox became restless. The ambitious among them saw an opportunity to rise against the Emperor who was declared to be guilty of lassitude towards the true faith. The disgruntled thought of Mahomed Hakim, the Emperor's younger brother in Kabul, as a handy rival. He was believed to be orthodox and therefore fit to replace Akbar. Even those who were near the Emperor were not free from complicity.

The conflagration started in distant Bihar and Bengal where the Muslim officers rose in open mutiny. Khan Jahan the Governor of Bengal had died in 1578 and had been succeeded in March 1579 by Muzaffar Khan Tarbuti. Shah Mansur, an expert in treasury matters and above all in accountancy, was the Imperial Dewan, zealous, hard and unsympathetic in the enforcement of administrative regulations. The Imperial treasury had sent instructions to Muzaffar Khan to adhere to and enforce strictly the rules as to the branding of horses. The new Governor had also been instructed to institute inquiries into certain unauthorised holdings of some of the influential military officers. If not satisfied about these holdings, he was even to confiscate and resume them as crown lands.

The new Governor had no choice but to follow the instructions. While examining some of these holdings, Muzaffar declined to confirm the jagirs of two influential amirs, Baba Khan Qaqshal and Khalil Khan who had hoodwinked at the Branding Law, a regulation hated by most of the *Mansabdars*.[1] Abul Fazl, however, accuses Muzaffar of having put on haughty airs and leaving the Bengal administration entirely in the hands of greedy and corrupt subordinates. He even conceded that the rebels had some cause. But Muzaffar was merely executing the orders received from the centre.

The immediate reason for the revolt, however, was the refusal of Shah Mansur to increase the salaries of the soldiers in these two provinces. The Emperor had ordered an increase by 100 per cent in Bengal and 50 per cent in Bihar. Yet Mansur, on his own, reduced the increase by more than half and sanctioned only 50 per cent in Bengal and 20 per cent in Bihar. Unfortunately by the time these orders came, the increase had already been distributed and Muzaffar was compelled to issue orders for a refund of the excess paid to the officers.[2]

The spark that set the revolt in motion was the arrest by Muzaffar Khan of one Roshan Beg, a servant of Mahomed Hakim, who had recently arrived in Bengal after escaping from Kabul. The soldiers assembled in Gaur and plundered Muzaffar's property. Instead of putting down the rebellion firmly, Muzaffar tried to conciliate their leaders, promising to confirm their jagirs. The rebels noticed the feebleness of the Governor. They demanded that two important revenue officers, Rizvi Khan and Patradas, appointed to assist Muzaffar Khan, should be sent to them as hostages. The Governor weakly complied with these demands. But when the two officers went to the rebels, they were imprisoned.

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1. Badaoni Tr. Lowe, II, 288-291.
2. A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 427-432.

The revenue officers in Bihar had also received similar instructions from the Diwan. The jagir lands of Mansum Khan of Kabul and Arab Bahadur, two of the most turbulent jagirdars in that Province had been confiscated.

A match was needed to set the whole province in flames. That was furnished by Mulla Mahomed Yazdi, the Kazi of Jaunpur, who had been recently banished by Akbar from the Court where he had played a conspicuous part in the opposition to the Jesuits. The Mulla issued a *Fatwa* which justified revolt against the Emperor for his several religious innovations. The *Fatwa* gave a religious bias to the revolt which otherwise was nothing but a violent expression of dissatisfaction against a strict administration which threatened to deprive the rebels of their fief lands.

Rai Purshottam marched against the force of rebels led by Arab Bahadur. Arab fell on the Imperial force and killed the Rai. He and Mansum Khan now combined their forces and marched to Girhi where they joined hands with the Bengal rebels.

Finding himself in danger, Muzaffar Khan locked himself in the fort of Tanda. Qaqshal and Mansum Khan however succeeded in luring him out of the fort on false pretexts of negotiations and on April 19, 1580 treacherously killed him. Collecting a very large force, the leaders of the rebels virtually took over the whole of Bengal and Bihar.

The news of the revolt soon reached the Court. Alarmed at the immensity of the rebellion, Akbar sent Raja Todermal, Sadiq Khan, Tarsum Khan and other trusted officers from Fathpur to quell the revolt.[3] The rebels replied by looting Tanda and reciting the *Kutbah* in the name of Hakim[4] in the mosques of the Bengal capital.

Heartened by their easy successes, the rebels even dared to advance with an army which had now swelled to 30,000 horsemen and 50 elephants against Todermal who had reached Monghyr. Not sure of the loyalty of his own men, Todermal

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3. Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 288-291.
4. A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 443.

thought it prudent to confine himself within the walls of Monghyr.

Fortunately for him, Qaqshal suddenly fell ill and some of his leading men began to go over to the Raja. The split among the rebels forced Mansum Khan to retire to Bihar and his colleague Arab Bahdur advanced towards Patna to plunder the Imperial treasury there.

Encouraged by the dissensions among the enemy, Todermal and Sadiq Khan marched towards Bihar, first to suppress Mansum Khan. Anticipating the Imperial generals, Mansum made a night attack on Sadiq Khan but the attack was repulsed and Mansum fled for his life to Isa Khan, the zamindar of Orissa. With the flight of Mansum Khan, the back of the rebellion was broken and the country between Bihar and Garhi once more came under the control of the Imperial army[5].

Akbar appointed his foster-brother, Mirza Aziz Koka, as the governor of Bengal. The Mirza was a man of insubordinate temperament who had been in disgrace for some time and had been consequently excluded from the Court. He also recalled Shahbaz Khan from the campaign against Rana Pratap. Mirza Aziz was given the title of Khan Azam and he and Shahbaz were sent to the eastern provinces to capture Arab Bahadur.[6] The appointment of Khan Azam and his return to royal favour were significant. It was obvious that Akbar considered the situation alarming enough not to leave a man so influential as the Mirza sulking. Both he and Shahbaz belonged to the orthodox section of the amirs at the Court.

Even with the recovery of Bihar and Garhi, the situation was not free from danger. Mansum Khan Farankhudi, distinguished from that other rebel, Mansum Khan Kabuli, an officer under Raja Todermal, had also started showing signs of discontent. Shah Mansur had treated him somewhat harshly and had demanded certain exactions from him. Leaving Todermal, suddenly, he went to Jaunpur and there revolted. With a view not to drive him to desperation,

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5. Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 291.
6. Ibid, 291.

Akbar sent Peshru Khan with instructions to appease him and appointed Tarsun Khan as the governor of Jaunpur. He even appointed Mansum Farankhudi as the governor of Oudh. As a further assurance, Birbal and Quli Khan Mahram were sent to Oudh to appease and win him over.[7] To pacify the rebels, the Emperor removed Shah Mansur from the post of the Diwan and, as a temporary arrangement, appointed Wazir Khan in his place.[8]

In spite of these conciliatory moves, the situation worsened. Reports arrived in Bihar that Mahomed Hakim had started invasion of the Punjab and that the Emperor was going to the north to meet this new danger. These reports encouraged Mansur Farankhudi who made no attempt now to conceal his rebellion. He forcibly captured Jaunpur expelling the servants of Tarsun Khan from that city. For a while, Akbar would not believe that this man to whom he had shown favours would so behave. Messages were sent to him either to join the royal army in Bihar and help to put down the rebellion or to return to the Court. He took no heed of them. Yet another conciliatory message was sent to him that if he did not wish to do either, he should at least proceed to Oudh and treat that Province as his fief. Mansum made a show of obeying this order and went to Oudh but in reality his object in marching there was to strengthen his position. He even gave impudent replies to the messages of reconciliation sent by Birbal and Quli Khan Mahram.

In the meantime, Shahbaz Khan arrived with his army. On January 22, 1581 the Imperial army met a force under Mansum at Sultanpur about 25 *kos* from Ayodhya where Shahbaz inflicted a decisive defeat on Mansum and Nayabat Khan, a nephew of Shiabuddin Khan Ahmed who had joined him.[9]

Nayabat Khan had been in the Imperial service from his early age and had been entrusted with the management of crown lands. The accountants at the Imperial treasury indicted him for arrears. The prospect of paying up these

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7. Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 297.
8. Smith, Akbar, 187.
9. A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 483, 487.

dues drove him to rebellion. His first act was to besiege the town of Karrah. Wazir Khan, who was the Governor of Oudh, then marched against him and defeated him. Nayabat, however, managed to escape to Oudh where he joined Mansum.[10].

After his defeat at Sultanpur, Mansum fled to Ayodhya and entrenched himself behind the walls of the fort. Shahbaz failed to pursue him there but fortunately for the Imperial cause the rebels again quarrelled among themselves. Nayabat and Arab Bahadur deserted Mansum who fled from Ayodhya and ultimately took refuge in the Sivalik hills in the Punjab. Shahbaz captured Ayodhya and made Mansum's family his captives. But the Emperor had other troubles and did not wish to exacerbate the situation. He therefore ordered Shahbaz to spare the family of Mansum.[11]

Mansum did not find any support in the Sivalik hills and had to undergo great distress. At last he beseeched the Emperor for forgiveness through Khan Azam.[12] In March 1582 both Mansum and Nayabat obtained pardon through the intervention of Hamida Banu, the Queen Mother.

One night in July 1582, Mansum was returning home from the Court when some men fell on him and in the darkness of the night did him to death. According to some, the Emperor had never really forgiven him. He had been forced to give a reluctant pardon to Mansum in deference to his mother's wishes. Mansum, on his part, also was suspected of not having been genuinely repentant for all his treasonous acts. Akbar had him therefore killed by Sikandar Qalmag, a trusted disciple [13]. The rebellion in the east was quelled at last but not without giving anxious moments to Akbar.

The year 1581 may be considered as the most critical period in the life of Akbar. Besides the rebellion in Bengal and Bihar which had not yet been put down, this year also witnessed a serious attempt on the part of Mahomed Hakim to invade India. There is ample testimony that some of the

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10. A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 480, 481.
11. Ibid 496, 497.
12. Nizamuddin, Tabakat-i-Akbari, in Ell & Daw, V, 426.
13. A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 566, 567, 577.

leaders of the revolt had been deeply involved in the conspiracy to invite the Kabul Prince to India.

Desperados were not wanting in the capital itself. A conspiracy was hatched; the object was first to assassinate Akbar and then to join the Bengal insurgents. Luckily, the plot was soon discovered and Miraki, the main leader, was executed at the orders of Akbar.[14]

Fortunately for Akbar, there was no prominent leader amongst the rebels, nor was the main character of the plot, Prince Mahomed Hakim, such as could withstand the guile and the strength of the Emperor.

In 1563-1564, after Mirza Sulaiman of Badakhshan had routed Shah Abdulmali, Kabul had fallen under the sway of the Badakhshis. Large portions of lands were given as fiefs to the followers of Sulaiman. For a time, Mahomed Hakim was a mere puppet of the Mirza. When Hakim reached the age of discretion, he started gradually to deprive the Badakhshis of their fiefs granted by Sulaiman. Sulaiman thereupon advanced against Kabul. Hakim left the city in the hands of a few trusted men and fled to Peshawar. Intent on capturing him, Sulaiman chased him but Hakim managed to cross the Indus and asked help from Akbar. Sulaiman, therefore, had to give up his pursuit but on his return laid siege to Kabul.

Akbar was at Nagarcain when Hakim's embassy came to ask for help. Akbar felt that Hakim ought to have a trustworthy guardian and appointed Qutubuddin Khan. At the same time, he issued instructions to the Punjab army to march to Kabul with the Prince. The Punjab force advanced first to Jalalabad which was held by Sulaiman's general Qamhar Ali. In a battle which hardly lasted for an hour, the Punjab army captured the town and put to sword Qamhar Ali and his 300 soldiers. Only two survived to carry the tragic news to Sulaiman and his ambitious wife Haram, both then engaged in the siege at Kabul.

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[14] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 441, 442.

As soon as Sulaiman heard the news, he and his wife hurriedly raised the siege and returned crestfallen to Badakhshan leaving Kabul to Prince Hakim.[15]

In 1566, Sulaiman again invaded Kabul. Once again Hakim fled, this time to Gorband. Leaving Sulaiman at Kabul, his wife went to Gorband and there tried to snare Hakim to come out to see her. Not realising the game that this bold woman was playing, Hakim started to go to her. Luckily for him he discovered in time the plot to catch him, for Sulaiman was hiding at his wife's instance in an ambush. Hakim fled, crossed the Indus and once again petitioned his brother for help.

Akbar had already received the news of Sulaiman's invasion and had sent Faridun, the maternal uncle of Hakim to the help of his brother. The Emperor also sent a little later on Kush Khabar Khan with men and material to save Kabul and directed his officers in the Punjab also to march and drive away Sulaiman. Before Kush Khabar Khan could however meet Hakim, Faridun instigated the Prince to seize Kush Khabar and to attack the Punjab. Though of a weak intellect, Hakim would not go so far but he dismissed Kush Khabar and besieged Lahore.

The news reached Akbar in October 1566. On the 17th of that month, Akbar himself marched from Agra. Hakim thereupon left Lahore, retreating to the Indus. Akbar still advanced, hunting on his way and reached Lahore by the end of February 1567. The army was asked not to pursue his erring brother but to leave him alone. When he heard that Akbar was marching towards the north-west, Sulaiman abandoned his siege of Kabul. Hakim once more returned to Kabul.[16]

Since then the Emperor had received complaints against Hakim on several occasions. He also knew that his brother had had a hand in the rebellion in Bengal but he forbore doing anything so long as his younger brother had not done anything openly. To those who counselled action he used to say: "He is a memorial of H. M. Jahanbani (Humayun). A son can be acquired but how can a brother be obtained?"

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[15] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, II, 359-365.
[16] Ibid, 407, 411.

In his weak way, however, Hakim had secretly entertained the hope of winning his brother's dominions in Hindustan. Some of the leading spirits among the Bengal rebels had sent messages to him that he had only to march to the Punjab and the army there would shift its allegiance to him. Some of the amirs at the Court, resentful of the Emperor's religious lapses, were also involved in the conspiracy to invite Mahomed Hakim and had given him hopes that the people would desert the Emperor and go over to his side.

Encouraged with these messages, Mahomed Hakim decided upon an invasion. In December 1580, he sent a body of troops under Haji Nuruddin which crossed the Indus. Yusuf Khan, a local fief-holder, sent an army under Hasan Beg against the Kabul force. When Hasan Beg was about to encamp, waiting for Nuruddin's army to appear, a herd of deer appeared and Hasan Beg instead of attacking the enemy indulged in deer hunting. Nuruddin in the meantime was sighted and the two opposing detachments encountered each other. There was hardly anything like a serious fight and Hasan Beg was able to wound Nuruddin and put him to flight. The battle thereupon suddenly ended. Dissatisfied with the manner of Yusuf Khan's opposition to Nuruddin's army, Akbar superseded him and appointed Mansingh in his place.

In spite of Nuruddin's reverse, Mahomed Hakim sent another force this time under Shadman, his best general. Mansingh had already sent an advancef orce which he and his brother Surajsingh followed. A fierce hand-to-hand fight took place in the engagement that followed and Surajsingh mortally wounded and killed Shadman. Shadman was an intimate life-companion of Hakim. Akbar knew that Hakim would advance to the Punjab to avenge the death of his general and therefore decided to march in person.

Fr. Monserrate, who accompanied Akbar in the expedition to the north-west, believed that Mahomed Hakim undertook the invasion of the Punjab on the promises given to him by some of the disgruntled nobles at the Court. These promises were that, as soon as he marched, he would receive reinforcements from India followed by considerable desertions in the Imperial army. Even Akbar thought that the invasion by his younger brother was a serious threat to his dominions.

Akbar made his preparations on a vast scale, assembling a force of 50,000 cavalry, 500 elephants and an innumerable host of infantry. Not to give any reason for dissatisfaction in his army, he ordered payment of 8 months' salary in advance.[17] He left nothing to his lieutenants but arranged everything personally with meticulous care, including supplies for this vast army. Monserrate was astounded to find that in spite of such great numbers in the Imperial camp, provisions could be had at cheap prices. To ensure these low prices Akbar had exempted the dealers from all dues and customs.[18] To ensure unhindered supply of water, Akbar always marched near the mountains. Sappers and labourers were sent in advance to level the roads. Bridges of boats were built for the army to cross the rivers. Scouts were sent 18 miles ahead to see that no surprise attacks were made. Strict discipline was maintained in the army.[19]

Already the Emperor had come to suspect that Shah Mansur, his Prime Minister, was involved in the invasion by his brother. Not letting Mansur know that he was aware of it he cunningly ordered him to accompany the expedition thus preventing the Minister from doing any mischief during his absence. Fr. Monserrate was also told "to make preparations for a journey for you are going with me."[20]

Before he started, Akbar sent Rai Raisingh, Jagannath, Raja Gopal and others to Mansingh's camp with the message that, even if Mahomed Hakim crossed the Indus, they should put off any engagement with him until he came. He wanted to take no chances in an event which threatened his very sovereignty.

Everything was now ready to the satisfaction of the Emperor. The Court astrologers had selected Monday the 6th of February 1581 as the auspicious day to start. Prince Salim was to accompany his father. Prince Danial was left behind to represent the Emperor, assisted by Quli Khan Marham, Shaikh Ibrahim and others.[21]

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[17] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 299.
[18] Banerjee & Hayland, Commentary of Fr. Monserrate, 79-83.
[19] Ibid, 71-73, 74, 77.
[20] Ibid, 77.

Akbar's first halt was at Delhi. Two days later he reached Sonepat and encamped near Thaneshwar. He made a point of visiting the cell of Shaikh Jalal, perhaps to dispel all suspicions among his followers that he had abandoned the true faith. The Shaikh was a man of great piety. He came from Balkh and belonged to the Chisti order. For eighty years he had read each day the Koran in its entirety and had never left his cell. He died on January 9, 1582 at the ripe age of 93,

Whereas Akbar started from Fathpur on February 6, 1581, his brother reached the vicinity of Lahore on the 15th. Said Khan, Bhagwandas, Mansingh and others were ready to defend the city but according to the Emperor's instructions they contented themselves with merely strengthening the fortifications.

Contrary to all the promises and hopes given to him, Mahomed Hakim found the city well fortified. Seeing there were no movements in his favour nor any desertions, he got restless and quarrelled with his own general. When he heard that Akbar was fast approaching, his feeble heart quailed. He turned quickly to fly to Kabul crossing the Chenab near Jalalabad. In the hasty retreat he made, he lost many of his men, who, sharing the fright of their leader, got drowned in the river while trying to cross it. Still Akbar issued an order not to pursue the invader.[22]

The Emperor encamped on the bank of the Indus. Apprehending that his brother might get alarmed at seeing such a vast army and seek the protection of outsiders, he sent some of his men to persuade Hakim to submit. Perhaps Hakim would have sought safety in submission but Faridun, his maternal uncle, would not let him. When these conciliatory messages failed Akbar ordered Mansingh to cross the Indus and march to Peshawar. About the end of June 1581, Murad also was sent with another force with instructions that if Mahomed Hakim still agreed to submit, they were to show friendliness. They were otherwise to march to Afghanistan. Murad's army was put into battle array. In the centre was Murad himself with Yusuf Khan, Raisingh, Rai Durga, Gujarkhan, Suraj Singh, Madan Chohan, Ramchand, Thakur Sai, Kakar Ali, Prithviraj, Ramdas, Mathuradas, Sanswal Das, Kala Kachhwaha, Askaran and others. The left wing was entrusted to Sayyid Hamid Bhokari and the right wing to Qulij Khan. Bhagwandas and Mansingh led the vanguard.[23] Considering the revolt by Muslim officers in Bengal and their duplicity with Mahomed Hakim, the Emperor seems to have relied largely on his Rajput generals.

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[21] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 494.

[22] Ibid, 508, 509, 510.

Before these events, came the end of Shah Mansur which occurred when Akbar was at Sonepat. Mansur began his career as a mere accountant in the Perfumery department. By sheer dint of merit he rose to be the *Vazir* in 1575 and filled that post with ability. About his competence there could be no doubt for Abul Fazl testifies that "there is seldom found such an acute accountant and one so laborious and discriminating."[24]

But Mansur was by far the most unpopular figure at the Court. His stern policy of retrenchment, his meticulous enquiries in financial matters and his unsympathetic attitude towards his subordinates evoked the hatred of those who had to deal with him. The corrupt officials and the zamindars naturally dreaded him and were waiting for his fall.

According to Fr. Monserrate, the Emperor's partiality towards the Jesuits confirmed the rumour spread by the orthodox wing at the Court that Akbar had abjured Islam. His omission to observe the customary rites and his tirades against orthodoxy had enraged many and especially Mansur who was stirred by these things to treason. Mansur induced several others to join in the conspiracy to oust Akbar and wrote letters to Mahomed Hakim to bestir himself and invade India assuring him that there would be no opposition worth the name to such an undertaking.

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23. Ibid, 519.
24. Ibid, 504, 505.

Before the expedition had started, a copy of a letter by Mansur had been intercepted and brought to Akbar's notice. Mansur was deprived of his post and for a time kept in honourable confinement. A month later, however, Akbar released Mansur with a mere warning and even reinstated him in his post.

Mansur was, however, no whit reconciled by the liberal pardon and again plunged deep in the conspiracy. Monserrate thought that Mansur deliberately provoked the revolt in the eastern provinces by making Akbar unpopular with measures such as the Law of Branding and the reduction in the soldiers' salaries.[25] That, of course, is not true for the Law of Branding was introduced as early as 1573 by Shahbaz Khan long before the revolt.

All the same, Mansur had made the administration unpopular by his orders of reduction of allowances to the soldiers and his unsympathetic harshness and interference with the grants of *Saryughal* lands. The only thing needed to kindle the fire of revolt was something by which the people could be persuaded to consider it a duty to rebel. That was furnished by the *Fatwa* of Mulla Mahomed Yazdi.

At Sonepat, some letters believed to have been written by the agents of Mahomed Hakim to Mansur were intercepted and shown to Akbar. Mansur was at once clapped into prison. Monserrate who was there with the Emperor believed that Mansur was guilty of treason and that these letters were genuine. In his commentary the Jesuit gives a detailed picture of what followed.

Akbar ordered the officers of his bodyguard and those of the corps of executioners and a few prominent generals with Shah Mansur to halt at Baadum near Shahabad. He asked Abul Fazl, whom he appointed a sort of a Public Prosecutor, to recite in the presence of these persons all the benefits that the King had conferred on Mansur right from his boyhood. Mansur then was confronted with the proof of his ingratitude and treason. He was convicted and condemned to be hanged on the evidence of his correspondence with Hakim which was produced and shown to him. Abul Fazl then exhorted the condemned Minister to bear manfully the punishment he so richly deserved. "This was all carried out", observes Monserrate, "in such a way that those who were present were convinced of the justice of the measures taken by the King against Xamansurus (Shah Mansur) and were incited to do their duty better in future." Mansur was hanged on a tree nearby. The news of the execution was received by the King's followers with loud acclamations.[26]

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[25] Banerjee & Hayland, Commentary of Fr. Monserrate, 66, 70.

There is considerable difference of opinion amongst contemporary Muslim historians about the genuineness of the letters on the basis of which Mansur was hanged. Nizamuddin, who also was in this expedition, thought that these intercepted letters were forgeries and that Karamulla, the brother of Shahbaz Khan, "had colluded with others to concoct letters and that he had forged the last letter on the evidence of which Khwaja Mansur was executed. After this was discovered, the Emperor often regretted the execution of the Khwaja."[27] According to some, Karamulla was the tool of Todermal while some others maintained that Akbar did not wish to hang Mansur but was induced to do so by Birbal and others.[28]. These views, however, are not supported by either Abul Fazl or Fr. Monserrate though both were in the expedition and the former had played a conspicuous part in the prosecution of Mansur.

Abul Fazl himself was of the view that some *Parwanas* (orders) in the handwriting of the Bakshi of Mahomed Hakim were found by Mansing's men from the person of Shadman when he was killed. Mansingh sent these to Fathpur as the purport of one of them at least was that "petitions of unanimity and well-wishing were increasing the estimation (of the Mirza for the Khwaja)". Akbar was prone to think at that time that these letters were not genuine and therefore did not confront Mansur with them.

When Akbar, however, was at Sonepat, Malik Sani, an old servant of Hakim came to the camp. As a matter of caution, Akbar suspended Mansur from his post of *Vazir* in which he had been reinstated. Abul Fazl observes that there was great uneasiness in the camp by this unexpected arrival of the Malik. Akbar called Mansur in his Privy Chamber and faced him with the letter of Mahomed Hakim to him. Not satisfied with Mansur's replies, Akbar ordered his detention. A few days after, Malik Ali, the Chief Constable of the Imperial camp, produced several other letters and these confirmed the suspicion about the *Vazir*. These letters showed that Mansur's own men in his fief at Firozpur had opened negotiations and had promised to join Mahomed Hakim.

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[26] Ibid, 98-99.
[27] Nizamuddin, Tabakat-i-Akbari, in Ell & Daw, V, 426.
[28] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 505.

Akbar was wild with rage and ordered that Mansur should remain in prison until he produced the writer of those letters. Mansur did not produce that man and he was ordered by the Emperor to be executed.[29].

Badaoni who generally follows Nizamuddin also alleges that the last letter on which Akbar ordered the execution was forged and states that Akbar found, after he reached Kabul where he made inquiries, that Karamulla had "concocted all this forgery and deception and that the last letter also which had been the cause of his (Mansur's) being put to death was a forgery of the Amirs."[30]

But, whereas Badaoni alleges that all the letters were fabricated, Nizamuddin, who refers to the three letters found from Shadman by Mansingh's men, does not allege that they were forgeries. [31] This clearly shows that Badaoni was making a sweeping charge. But, if Akbar had found out at Kabul that he had been deceived into ordering the execution of so important an official like Mansur on the basis of forged documents, it is inconceivable that after his return to Fathpur he would have kept quiet without at least taking some steps against Karamulla.

On the whole, the statement of Fr. Monserrate that Mansur was found guilty of treason can be safely accepted.[32]

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[29] Ibid, 501, 502, 503, 505.

[30] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, III, 303.

[31] Nizamuddin, Tabakat-i-Akbari, in Ell & Daw, V, 422-423.

[32] But see Smith, Akbar, 196, where he agrees with Nizamuddin's charge that Mansur was wrongly hanged.

After Mansur's execution, the Emperor advanced to Ambala and then to Sirhind. At Payal, he learnt that Hakim had retreated from the Punjab. That gave him some respite during which he got a strong fort built on the bank of the Indus. He called that fort Attak to rhyme with the Cuttack Fort which was then known as Katak Benaras.

Until the news of Hakim's retreat arrived, Akbar was seen frowning with deep anxiety but now he became cheerful, showed that he laid aside all cares and indulged in several excursions in the country around in a chariot. [33]

On July 11, 1581 he crossed the Indus and encamped at the junction of the Indus and Kabul rivers. After eight days, Haji Habibullah brought a conciliatory message from Hakim but it was not in conformity with Akbar's offer and was therefore rejected. The Emperor issued orders to Murad to advance from Peshawar, he himself following Murad's army at leisure and establishing his camp at Daulatabad. There, another message arrived from Mahomed Hakim expressing regret for the past and even accepting Akbar's service. This too was rejected, resolved as the Emperor now was to proceed to Kabul.

There were, however, some influential Amirs in whom sympathy for Mahomed Hakim was still lurking and who thought that he should be pardoned and the army should return. Monserrate observes Akbar spending nights together in prolonged councils of war and consulting astrologers. The reason for these anxieties was obvious. Though Hakim was not a foe of whom Akbar could have any fears, the situation created by the invasion was still explosive. Considering that there were disloyal elements in his Court such as Mansur, the Emperor still needed to exercise caution and the grim deliberateness with which he prosecuted this campaign. If by chance something untoward happened, Hakim could still be made a focal point round whom all the malignant elements would gather. On the other hand, if he did not advance to Kabul and punish Mahomed Hakim, his brother would again renew the war after his return,.[34]

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[33] Banerjee & Hayland, Commentary of Fr. Monserrate, 102.
[34] Ibid, 121, 123.

Hakim had neither the spirit nor the talent to face the situation that he had himself created. He, in fact, wished to surrender. Faridun however goaded him saying that his countrymen would be a match for Akbar's hordes.[35]

When Mahomed Hakim learnt that Akbar's camp was at Peshawar and that the only army that had advanced was the one under the young Prince Murad, he hastened to prepare for battle and came out with the full force of his cavalry numbering about 15,000. On hearing this, Akbar began to march rapidly leaving his main camp behind in charge of Prince Salim, Bhagwandas and Said Khan. Passing through the Khyber, he took some rest at Daka and made a rapid march at night reaching Jalalabad the next morning. His swift couriers were reporting to him the news about Murad's army.

Next day he halted at Gandamark. Someone there reported though wrongly that Murad had lost against Hakim. Anxiously, he called his Council and decided to advance at once although the main army was left behind. At Surkhab he drew up his force in battle array and reached Jagdalak where he received the welcome news that Murad had actually won.[36]

In the very first contact that Hakim had with Murad's vanguard, he fled although he had brought his entire cavalry, accusing Faridun that he had blundered in permitting Akbar's large army to enter his territory undisturbed. [37] In the action against Murad, except for a few preliminary skirmishes, nothing much had happened. The entire battle had lasted for a watch and a little more.[38]

Hakim was confusion incarnate. Sometimes he blamed his stars, often his companions and sometimes in a black mood of disappointment he disparaged himself for having listened to his followers. At one time he would think of fortifying Khyber and another time Kabul and then go away into the safety of the mountains. Unfortunately for him, he had not the talents to evoke loyalty towards him and his cause from his own people at Kabul. He was even obliged to hand over the keys of that city to its leaders and to stay at Qarabagh outside the city walls.

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[35] Ibid, 134, 139.

[36] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 529-531.

[37] Banerjee & Hayland, Commentary of Fr. Monserrate, 134, 139.

[38] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 529-531.

The news of Akbar's advance upto Jalalabad was sufficient to frighten his feeble heart. Leaving Kabul unprotected, he sought safety in the mountains. Akbar advanced from Jagdalak to Butkhak where Mansing came and did homage. A little further up Murad joined him.

At Siah Sang, the Emperor halted for some days waiting for the astrologers to permit him to proceed. He then proceeded to Shahrara Gardens and there learnt that Hakim was hiding in Gorband. Fearing that Hakim might take refuge with the neighbouring rulers, he sent Khwaja Latif and Kazi Abdul Latif to him with a message of clemency asking him to come to the Court without any fear. On August 9, 1581 he entered Kabul in all glory and grandeur.

In the meantime, the Imperial envoys contacted Hakim now in a sorely repentant mood. He confessed that he should have conceded his elder brother's suzerainty. He declined, however, to come to Court lamenting with what face he could come to perform the *Kornish* and agreed to send his son instead.[39]

But Hakim's sister was in Kabul to plead for her brother's cause. Akbar pardoned him at her intercession and Kabul once again was restored to him though on the condition that it was to remain in charge of Hakim's sister. [40]

The Emperor stayed in Kabul for 7 days reviving the memories of his childhood and enjoying the sights of the many beautiful gardens his aesthetic grandfather had laid. He visited the tomb of Babur and then started for his return journey leaving the army under Murad to follow by easy stages.

He received the congratulations of his officers at Jalalabad where he had left the main army and the ladies of the

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39. Ibid, 542, 543.
40. Banerjee & Hayland, Commentary of Fr. Monserrate, 152, 154.

harem. Fr. Monserrate observes that the Emperor was particularly gratified to receive congratulations from him and "being very greedy of glory he hoped that through him his fame would reach Spain."[41]

Akbar had left Fathpur on February 6, 1581 and returned on December 1, 1581 after nearly ten months. [42]

The easy success of the Kabul expedition meant the total subjugation of the malcontents both within India and outside. It was the climax of the Emperor's career. It gave him an absolute and free hand throughout the latter years of his life to develop the policies, both secular and religious, on principles he had at heart.

Mansingh, who was the real hero of the army under Murad, was appointed the Governor of the Indus Province.

Immediately after Akbar's return, Mahomed Hakim came out of his hiding and returning to Kabul took charge of his territory from his sister. He, however, did not survive long for he died on July 30, 1585 at the young age of 31.

Akbar at once directed Mansingh to proceed to Kabul and to see that Hakim's children were not sent away to Turan as some of the leading spirits in Afghanistan intended. So serious was he to get hold of his brother's children that on August 22, 1585 he himself marched to Rawalpindi though under the usual pretext of hunting. To bring Kabul within his easy reach, he directed Kasim Khan, his clever engineer, to build a road upto Indus and through Khyber to Kabul. Encamping at Rawalpindi, he watched for any developments in Kabul. But Mansingh in the meantime seized Hakim's children and, leaving Kabul in charge of his son Jagatsingh, he returned to Rawalpindi and handed them over to the Emperor. The end of the year 1581 saw Akbar at the peak of power. The two rebellions, which a year ago had threatened his sovereignty and even his life, had been totally crushed. There was no possible pretender or rival against him in all his vast dominions and none who dared raise his head against him.

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[41] Ibid, 154.

[42] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 547-548.

CHAPTER XII

DIN-I-ILAHI (DIVINE FAITH)

I

To commemorate his victory over Kabul, Akbar summoned to Court all his provincial Governors for the Nauvroz feast. The revolt in Bengal and Bihar and the attempted invasion of India by his younger brother, both instigated by the orthodox opponents of his liberalism, opened his eyes to the potentialities for evil, of dogmatic sectarianism. And he turned his attention to fighting that menace.

Akbar declared before those who had assembled in that Council that all religious bodies should be united "in such fashion that they should be both "one" and "all", with the great advantage of not losing what is good in any religion, while gaining whatever is profitable in another. In that way alone could God be honoured. In the previous two centuries, such religious reformers as Ramanand and Chaitanya, Kabir and Nanak, Raidas and Namdeo and a host of others had already paved the way for him by their relentless assaults on the priestly tabernacles, both Muslim and non-Muslim and by their incessant preaching that salvation could be attained only by direct approach to God through devotion and love and by leading a life of virtue and purity. It required a man of action, as Akbar essentially was, to complete the processes already started by these saints and reformers. He gave a fillip to the renaissance and reform that the sixteenth century witnessed.

The discussions in the *Ibadatkhana* had given the Emperor an opportunity to investigate into the many creeds and faiths that prevailed in his dominions. Many of the doctrines of Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity appealed to his heart which searched for the real truth. He had already put some into practice in the royal Palace. Yet, in his own detached way, he was not wholly satisfied with any of them.

Akbar would have been warmly welcomed into the Christian fold but he had found that Christianity, as unfolded to him by such men as Rudolf Acquiviva and Monserrate, was as uncompromising and sectarian as Sunni orthodoxy. The Fathers were as fanatical, inflexible and dogmatic as the Mullas in his Court.

Yet, the discussions in the *Ibadatkhana* were not unfruitful. When learned men, representing various faiths, combat with each other, under the patronage of the ruler and within the royal precincts, liberty of expression and opinion was bound to permeate all around, creating a general atmosphere of freedom. This was possible because the head of the State was a profound and disinterested student, the first man who ventured on a comparative study of the religions of the world.[1]

Akbar was well aware, however, that his sympathies towards other faiths, his cordial reception and patronage to their leaders on the one hand and his open criticism of some of the practices of Islam on the other had created a climate hostile to him culminating in armed revolts both in the east and west. Yet, his keen sense of realities must have made him realise that if the fabric of the Empire he had built up were to rest on firm foundations, it must rest on a sense of oneness and equality among his subjects.

When the Mullas challenged the Jesuits to an ordeal of fire, he had laid bare his innermost thoughts. "Most persons", he said, "from intimacy with those who adorn their outside, but are inwardly bad think that outward semblance and the letter of Muhammadanism profit without conviction. Hence we by fear and force compelled many believers in Brahman (Hindu) religion to adopt the faith of our ancestors. Now that the light of truth has taken possession of our soul, it has become clear that in this distressful place of contraries (world) where darkness of comprehension and conceit are heaped up, fold upon fold, a single step cannot be taken without the touch of proof and that that creed is profitable which is adopted by the approval of wisdom. To repeat the creed, to remove a piece of skin (circumcision) and to place the end of one's bones on the ground (the head in adoration) from the dread of Sultan is not seeking after God."[2]

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1. Dr. P. Saran, Socio-Religious Background at the Advent of Akbar, in the Journal of the U.P. His. Soc. Vol. XIX, 139.
2. A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 368, 370.

Having thus developed an aversion towards narrow sectarianism, Akbar's searching mind set out to dissect the dogmas and tenets of the various religions to discover the real truth. He finally evolved an eclecticism drawn from various faiths. But the orthodox never see the distinction between the essentials and the non-essentials and attribute the essence to the mere from of religion. All the reforms and criticisms of Akbar never touched the essence but only the outward practices. The priesthood, of course, could never be expected to appreciate the attack on these unessential rituals on which they prospered by exploiting the common man. They never reconciled themselves to the Emperor who was several centuries ahead of them and accused him of being anti-Muslim and of having renounced Islam.

It may be that in his innermost thoughts, Akbar realised that his search for truth must be circumscribed by dynastic and political considerations. He was too shrewd not to know that to embrace any other religion would be to provoke rebellion. Nonetheless, that does not detract from the genuineness of his belief in equality of status, freedom of conscience for all his subjects and the necessity of "co-existence." Bartoli reported that the Emperor was wont to say that "for an empire ruled by one head, it was a bad thing to have the members divided among themselves and at variance with one another."[3] It was with a view to bringing his subjects together instead of letting them live as hitherto in isolated camps that he had various Hindu works translated into Persian, introduced animal fights and other sports at the Polo ground at Fathpur and celebrated both Hindu and Muslim festivals where Muslims and non-Muslims could develop social ties and friendship.

These efforts, however, left the orthodox cold, inflexible and immobile. Some of them, like Badaoni, felt that the Emperor was convinced that, since the thousand years of Islam were about to be over, there was no hindrance left for the promulgation of those designs nursed secretly in his heart to annul the statutes and ordinances of Islam and to establish "his own cherished pernicious belief."[4] But Badaoni is not

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3. Smith, Akbar, 212.
4. Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 310.

alone in accusing Akbar of establishing a new religion with himself as its prophet.

Smith, following the authority of Bartoli, dates the proclamation of *Din-i-Ilahi*, divine monotheism, in 1582 during the session of that Council of Governors. But when the first Jesuit Mission left, Monserrate had merely a suspicion that Akbar cherished an intention to found a new religion. Pinheiro writing from the Court as late as September 1595 said that the Emperor "aims at making a new religion of which he himself is to be the head". These facts disprove the statement of Smith that a new religion was announced in 1582 in the Council of Governors. If such an announcement had been made, Monserrate was not the one to fail to observe and report.

What was this *Din-i-Ilahi* then? Abul Fazl describes it as four degrees of faith in His Majesty. These consisted of readiness to sacrifice for the Emperor, property, honour, life and religion. Whoever sacrificed these four things attained the four degrees. With characteristic exaggeration, Badaoni wrote that all the courtiers at once put their names down as faithful disciples of the throne.[5]

In truth, *Din-i-Ilahi* was intended to have an effect entirely secular in nature and theme; to give priority to loyalty to the throne even above religion, property, honour and life. To sanctify and dramatise it, Akbar prescribed a ceremony for making a *chela*, a disciple. "Let me rally round Akbar," the disciple had to say, "who combines the *Sufic* depth with practical wisdom. By his example he teaches men how to adore God in doing one's duties. The surest way of pleasing God is to obey God."[6] An initiation ceremony was also provided. On a Sunday the Emperor would receive the disciple. The initiate with his turban in his hands would place his head at the feet of the Emperor. The Emperor would make him rise, place the turban on the disciple's head and give him the *Shast* upon which were engraved the name of Akbar and the motto *Allahu Akbar*. A likeness of the King was also given which the disciple would wear in his turban. The disciple would be enjoined not to eat or touch meat during the month of Akbar's birth.[7]

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[5] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Blochmann, I, 191.

[6] Ibid, 162.

Full of wrath at what he conceived to be an usurpation of divinity by the Emperor, Badaoni asserted that Mirza Jani, the Governor of Thattah and some others signed a declaration that they had abjured Islam and embraced the new religion.[8] But this was the only declaration given to Akbar; no other declarations were either sought or taken. Some persons at the Court asked Akbar to use coercion to gather disciples. But even Badaoni admits that "His Majesty was at last convinced that confidence in him as a leader was a matter of time and good counsel and did not require the sword. And indeed if His Majesty, in setting up his claims and making his innovations, had spent a little money, he could have got most of his courtiers and much more, the vulgar into his devilish nets."[9]

No coercion, bribery or undue promotion to any of the courtiers had been alleged even by Badaoni. From amongst the Hindus, only Birbal became a disciple. Yet, Birbal remained throughout a staunch Hindu. There were in fact no dogmas attached to the new creed. For, when Bhagwandas was asked his opinion about the four degrees, he said "I would willingly believe that Hindus and Musalmans have each a bad religion but only tell us what the new sect is and what opinion they hold so that I may believe."[10] In 1587, when Mansingh was approached to become a disciple, he said that "if discipleship means willingness to sacrifice one's life, I have already carried my life in my hand. What need is there for further proof? But, if it has another meaning and refers to faith, I am a Hindu. If you order me to do so, I will become a Muslim, but I know not of the existence of any other religion than these two".[11] So serious a historian like Haig however asserts that by means of bribery and pressure, eighteen more or less prominent converts were secured.[12] But no authority

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7. Ibid, 191.
8. Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 314.
9. Ibid, 323.
10. Ibid, 323.
11. Ibid, 375.
12. Camb. Hist. of India, IV, 131.

is adduced for such an assertion. Badaoni, on whom Haig places so much reliance, clearly admits that the Emperor declined to use pressure. Even Smith concedes that "the number of adherents of the Divine Faith, Akbar's political sham religion, was never considerable."[13]

Din-i-Ilahi was by no means a new religion nor a new sect. At the most, it was an order whose purpose perhaps was veneration for its author. So far as Akbar was concerned, it was an "earnest and intense endeavour in search of a formula which would satisfy all but hurt none and contain all that was good and true and beautiful in the great faiths of the world."[14]

What precisely was the new Order is difficult to define. Barring a few references to it in the *Ain*, there is meagre information about its beliefs and practices in contemporary literature. It might well be that Akbar's desire was that his person should be the symbol of the unity he sought to build up amongst his subjects. Like many other autocrats of that century, he believed that a King was the shadow of God. But the order that he tried to establish cannot in any sense be called a religion. It had no holy book, no priests, no ceremonies and no religious dogmas or beliefs.

Mirza Jani's declaration was no more than a statement of his total loyalty to the King even to the extent of subordinating his religion. Besides Mirza Jani, there were other liberal-minded Muslims also who felt disgusted with the rapacity and avarice of the orthodox priesthood. Azam Khan Kokah, a staunch Muslim, was offended at first by Akbar's innovations. For a time he refused to attend the Court even when invited. But his pilgrimage to Mecca, where he was subjected to religious harassment by the orthodox, made such an impression on his mind that on his return he acknowledge Abul Fazl as his spiritual guide and became the disciple of Akbar. In all probability, Akbar had in mind the removal of those conditions in the Empire

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13. Smith, Akbar, 221.
14. Dr. P. Saran, Socio-Religious Background at the Advent of Akbar, A New Approach, in the Journal of the U.P. His. Soc. XIX, 138.

under which an ecclesiastic like Mulla Mahomed Yazdi could fan the fire of fanaticism against his authority. In short, Akbar wanted to rally round him a number of adherents who would place loyalty to the throne even above honour, property, life and religion.

The fact that men like Bhagwandas, Mansingh and Shahbaz Khan continued to hold high offices, in spite of their refusal to become disciples, shows that Akbar could not have used any pressure to augment the number of disciples. There were no doubt a number of persons in the capital called *Darshanias* who had taken a vow not to take food without seeing the face of their sovereign. Akbar himself also had made it a practice to sit in the royal window to give *darshan* to his subjects. The practice of Emperors sitting in the royal window was continued for a long period after his death. Even before him, Humayun used to give such *darshan* to his subjects from the terrace of his library in Delhi. Badaoni himself testifies that on numerous occasions Akbar had denied any claims to divinity.[15]

The obvious refutation of the allegation that he founded a new religion is found in the fact that even after 1583 Akbar continued to have religious discussions, patronised leaders of all faiths and summoned two more Jesuit missions from Goa.

II

After the departure of the first Jesuit mission in 1583, nothing is heard of the Christians until 1590. Abul Fazl mentions the arrival of Padre Firmilium at Lahore in April of that year. Whether that was the real name of the newcomer or whether it was Leo Grimon mentioned by Smith is somewhat doubtful. But Akbar received him with honour and entrusted him with the work of translating some Greek books into Persian.[16]

Through Leo Grimon, Akbar issued a fresh invitation to the Goa authorities to send a second mission. In the letter that he sent with Grimon, Akbar wrote "I would have your Reverences know that I have knowledge of all the faiths of the world, both of various kinds of heathen and of the Muhammedans save only that of Jesus Christ which is the faith of God and as such recognised and followed by many. Now in that I feel great inclination to the friendship of the Fathers, I desire that by them I may be taught this faith." With the letter, Grimon also carried lavish gifts from Akbar for distribution among the poor of Goa.

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[15] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 213.

[16] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 873-874.

Grimon seems to have raised hopes in the Goa authorities of a possible conversion of the Mughal Emperor for the Provincial wrote in his report: "And from what the sub-deacon (Grimon) tells us at Goa that this excellent Emperor is most anxious to establish the fundamental truths of Christianity and has induced the Prince, his son and his chief general to hold the same view." "The Emperor," he adds, "has turned all the mosques of the city (Lahore) where he lived into stables for elephants and horses on the pretence of preparation for war and destroyed the turrets of the mosques and this he did in his hatred for the Muhammedan sect and in his affection for the Gospel. The sub-deacon also said that the name of Muhammad was as hated at the Mughal's Court as in Christendom and that the Emperor had restricted himself to one wife, turning out the rest and distributing them among his courtiers."[17]

The report was obviously prompted by what Grimon, in his anxiety to secure a mission from Goa, told the Provincial. The mission that hastened to Lahore consisted of Fr. Edward Leighton and Fr. Christopher di Vega. But when the Fathers met their host they found that all the hopes that Grimon had raised in them were without foundation. The Emperor had not decided to embrace Christianity. For one reason or the other, the mission was recalled and the Fathers returned to Goa in 1592. Rome had believed the reports from Goa of the possibility of Akbar's conversion. The precipitous return of the Fathers therefore was looked upon with disfavour by the higher authorities there.[18]

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17. Letter as quoted in Smith, Akbar, 253-254.
18. F. F. Catrou, General History of the Mogul Empire extracted from the Memoirs of M. Manouchi (1709), 159-193.

Once again in 1594 Akbar asked the Goa authorities for learned priests. The Viceroy at Goa prevailed upon the Provincial of the Jesuits to send a third mission which was composed of Father Jerome Xavier, the grandson of the sister of Saint Xavier, Emmanual Pinheiro and Brother Benedict a Goes. They reached Lahore on April 29, 1595[19] and were received by Akbar with his usual cordiality and lodged in a pleasant palace near the river.

The Emperor even permitted the Fathers to share the royal cushion on which he and the Prince used to sit. He even went to the length of embracing the images of Christ and the Holy Virgin. From such cordiality and warm reception, the Fathers drew their conclusion. "It was not possible to doubt" they wrote, "that Akbar was a Christian from judgment and conviction" and the only thing that remained was a public declaration to that effect.[20]

The liberal Emperor donated lands to build a Church in Lahore and promised to bear the expenses. Pinheiro was even permitted to convert a few persons and to baptise them openly.[21] The conversion of the Emperor remained a day-dream. The hopes of converting him, nurtured by their own zeal and misunderstanding of the Emperor's cordiality towards them, were at last dashed to the ground. In frustration, they became angry with their host and, forgetting the ordinary canons of good behaviour, wrote as an excuse for their failure that "there remained in the breast of the monarch a stronghold of idolatry on which they could not make any impression. Not only did he adore the Sun and make long prayers to it four times a day; he also held himself forth as an object of worship."

Jerome Xavier stayed at the Court for well nigh 23 years even after Akbar's death. Pinheiro was mostly in Lahore, busy in his mission to convert the common people. Benedict a Goes also remained there until 1603 when he was ordered to go to Tibet where he died in 1607.[22]

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19. A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 1027.
20. F. F. Catrou, General History of the Mogul Empire, 161-163.
21. Ibid, 163.
22. Smith, Akbar, 259.

Did Akbar renounce Islam? That question has been for long contested with some amount of heat. The fact is that, except for Badaoni and the Jesuits, none of the contemporary writers declaimed Akbar as anti-Muslim or as having been converted to another faith. Nizamuddin Ahmad, though orthodox himself and a close friend of Badaoni, does not accuse Akbar of having betrayed the true faith. Although he came in close touch with the Emperor in the Kabul expedition, he does not mention *Din-i-Ilahi* as a new religion founded by Akbar. No such accusation is made by Ferishta, an independent man residing at Bijapur. He accompanied the Bijapur princess to the headquarters of Prince Danial and was bound to know the news of Akbar's Court. Another contemporary, Abul Haq in his *Tarikh-i-Haqqi* writing in the 42nd regnal year, prays that, through the aid of this omnipresent Emperor, the Mahomedan law and faith may be perpetuated for ever and ever.

Though Badaoni vilifies Faizi and Abul Fazl as the arch-enemies of Islam, Faizi wrote in 1593 his commentary on Koran. The commentary was widely read and admired in several countries. Badaoni's own history mentions a list of Muslim writers, poets and learned men sharing the patronage and bounties of Akbar. If the Emperor was a heretic and a persecutor of the Muslims, as alleged, he would not have patronised these men, including Badaoni himself.

After his death, as Finch testifies, Akbar's tomb was worshipped by pious Muslims during Jahangir's reign. In 1608, Jahangir went on foot on a pilgrimage to the Mausoleum of Akbar. Finding that it was not constructed on a scale it ought to have been, he ordered a new one to be built. When it was completed, it cost 15 lacs of rupees. Referring to his visit there, he wrote that if it had been possible, he would have traversed this road "with my eyelashes and head."[23] As late as 1619, Jahangir continued to visit the Mausoleum rubbing "the head of supplication on the threshold, the abode of angels and presented 100 mohurs as *nazar*." The Begums and other ladies accompanying him circumambulated the shrine and presented offerings. An assembly was held there, attended by several holy men, ecclesiastics and reciters of Koran, to each of whom Jahangir gave a dress of honour, a *farji* and a shawl.[24] All this veneration to Akbar's memory would not have been possible if he had renounced Islam or had turned anti-Muslim.

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[23] Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Tr. Rogers & Beveridge, I, 152.

The reports to that effect made by the Jesuits were the result of frustration of their ambitious project of converting such a powerful ruler to Christianity. Accustomed as they were to a bigotry as narrow as that of the Sunni zealots, they misinterpreted the Emperor's laxity in the outward practices of Islam, his hatred of intolerance, his catholicism and his wide sympathies with other faiths as renunciation of and even hostility towards Islam.

After 1594, the Emperor's liberalism and his deep faith in equality of status of all, irrespective of creed and caste, blossomed forth in full vigour. He gave full liberty to all to follow whatever faith their conscience dictated. Hindus were permitted to reconvert those who had been compelled to accept Islam under force. A degree was promulgated which declared that no man was to be interfered with on account of his religion. Yet another provided that no one was to obstruct or hinder if any one wished to build a church, a synogogue, a temple or a Parsi tower of silence.[25]

The Emperor's liberalism did not end with making these decrees. Mere religious tolerance implies the superiority of one faith over the other and permitting others to follow their conscience as a mere grace and charity. Akbar went a step further for he held as a positive conviction that truth was to be found in every religion. As an example to others, he himself cultivated respect for the religious sentiments of others. When on occasions he wore Hindu dress or the Portuguese dress, he did so not merely as an expression of his goodwill or sympathy for Hinduism or Christianity but to demonstrate that every faith has some fundamental truth to teach, a conclusion which he had arrived at after a lifetime of search. Bigotry misconstrued this catholicism as antipathy towards Islam.

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[24] Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Tr. Rogers & Beveridge, II, 102.
[25] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 405.

Badaoni, for instance, remarks with characteristic malice: "On further hearing how much the people of the country prized their institutions, he began to look on them with affection." Prohibition of eating beef was issued, as cows were held sacred by Hindus. In 1950-1951, Akbar, forbade eating of meat of oxen, buffaloes, goats, sheep, horses and camels. There was also a restraint on fishing.

These orders were recommendatory and were but the expressions of his personal opinions and not decrees which laid down any penalty for their breach. No doubt Badaoni would have us believe that those who transgressed them were killed and their property confiscated. Neither Abul Fazl nor Nizamuddin Ahmad mentions any case of a man executed or punished for any such offence.

But then these restrictions, even if they are so regarded, did not interfere with any religious principle of Islam. Eating of beef was lawful with Muslims but surely not compulsory. Akbar expressed by such edicts his conviction against meat-eating just as he expressed his distaste against such articles as garlic, onion etc. But the fact that these very articles were freely sold in the markets and their prices current in those days are set out in the *Ain* are clear proofs that they were neither banned nor barred.

The Emperor regarded abstinence from the use of meat in the same manner as the Sufis who forbade its use as a self-denying ordinance. " Of the austerities practised by my revered father " writes Jahangir, " one was the not eating the flesh of animals. During three months of the year, he ate meat and for the remaining nine, contented himself with Sufi food and was no way pleased with the slaughter of animals."[26]

Like his father, Jahangir too ordered the prohibition of killing animals on Sundays and Thursdays when he himself abstained from eating meat.[27] Among the very first ordinances that Jahangir issued on his accession, one prohibited the killing of animals from the date of his birthday till the number of days corresponding to his age.[28] No one charges Jahangir as having been either pro-Hindu or anti-Muslim because of these regulations.

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[26] Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Tr. Rogers & Beveridge, I, 45.

[27] Ibid, 184.

Freedom of conscience was in itself a dictate of conscience with Akbar. He himself said " Even animals form unions among themselves and avoid wilful violence......But men from the wickedness of their passions stand much more in need of a just leader." " Their inclination to that which is evil teaches their passions and lusts new ways of perversity, making them view the causing of bloodshed and harm to others as a religious command." "All strife is caused by this that men neglecting the necessities of their state, occupy themselves with extraneous concerns."[29]

The policy that Akbar thus propounded emanated from his conviction that God chooses a just King to quell the strife among men by his experience, intrepidity and magnanimity infusing in the subjects a new vigour. " A King should make a distinction in his watch over the goods, the lives, the property and the religion of his subjects." His policy based on such a concept of kingship was therefore something more than a mere passive toleration. He allowed the non-Muslims to follow their own religions and spiritual dictates "not as necessary evils" but because of his belief that "they had as much right to live under the *Pax Mughalica* as the Muslims and their creed."[30]

When Prince Murad was appointed the Governor of Malwa, he petitioned his father for instructions. Akbar not only answered the petition item by item but sent Abul Fazl to the Prince with additional verbal instructions. Amongst various things Murad had asked for were books. He was told that the translation of *Mahabharat* would be sent to him as also a list of the names of God to help him in his prayers. Among other things, the principal counsel to him was: "Let not difference of religion interfere with policy."[31]

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[28] Ibid, 9.

[29] A. F. Ain-iAkbari, Tr. Jarrett, III, 399.

[30] Dr. P. Saran Socio-Religious Background at the Advent of Akbar: A New Approach, in the Journal of the U.P. His. Soc. XIX, 134.

[31] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 912, 913 Murad's petition to his father is quoted by Beveridge.

Akbar reiterates the same thing in his letter to the Shah of Persia written in 1594 emphasising that "it must be considered that the Divine mercy attaches itself to every form and supreme exertions must be made to bring one's self into the ever vernal flower garden of 'Peace with all."[32] In 1597, when he sent Danial as the Governor at Allahabad, he gave the same advice not to allow himself to be prejudiced by diversity of religion and to struggle hard to be at peace with all.

What can be fairly claimed for Akbar is that he emancipated India from the thraldom of the religion of a minority and extricated her from the clamps of theocracy. Among the rulers of his time he ranks as the foremost for having endeavoured, in the atmosphere of fanaticism and intolerance prevalent in the 16th century, to fuse together the different classes of his subjects by bonds of a common citizenship and to establish a secular State. If he did not succeed in that great adventure, it was not due to want of effort but because the concept was too novel yet and he could not accelerate the march of events.[33]

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[32] Ibid, 1011-1913.

[33] Sri Ram Sharma, The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors 59.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NORTH-WEST AND KASHMIR

THE North-West frontier, unlike its eastern counterpart, has ever been a source of great concern to successive governments of India. Right from the 13th and the 14th centuries when the Mongols made their periodic raids on India, the rulers of Delhi found it necessary to adopt measures to safeguard this North-Western gateway of India. The military policy of the Delhi Sultans had always been governed by the need for fortifying this corner against possible attacks.

There were two sources of danger; the powerful Uzbegs and the wild, turbulent Afghan tribes, who lived all along the North-West border. Abdullah Khan, the Chief of the Uzbegs, had gradually strengthened his position and power until he had become truly formidable. He had already made himself master of all the territories beyond Kabul, which even included control over Badakhshan. There was also every likelihood of his gaining sympathies of the orthodox Sunnis in India. The reformist zeal of Akbar had turned many amongst them into open critics of the administration. They would not have had much hesitation in supporting a strong rival who could promise the return of the reactionary regime. So serious was the fear of an Uzbeg invasion that it made Akbar move to the north and make Lahore his capital for the next fifteen years.

The Yusufzai and the Mandar Afghan tribes living on the border, with their restless ways of life and abhorrence for any authority, had constantly led marauding attacks on the surrounding region.

Akbar was not by any means the first ruler to appreciate the problems of the North-West frontier. They seem to have been clearly appreciated from the beginning by the Muslim rulers unlike their predecessors, the Rajputs. The problem was two-fold, one in connection with the invasion of India by some ambitious chief from beyond the tribal areas and the second, disturbances by the Afghan tribes living in the border areas. The consciousness of the Muslim rulers that a vigilant frontier policy was necessary is noticeable, for instance, by the construction of such massive forts as Rohtas on the Jhelum by Shershah, Manmot in the Sivalik by Salimshah and Attock by Akbar.

During Akbar's time, able and tried soldiers like Munim Khan, Bhagwandas, Mansingh, Zain Khan Kokaltash and Todermal were successively kept in charge of this frontier. Right from the early years Akbar had this problem in mind and had considered it essential to annex the Gakkhar territory of Adam though his loyalty to the Mughal dynasty was never in dispute.

Akbar felt the necessity of a vigorous defence policy in two directions, one against the neighbouring states in the north and the other in safeguarding the Imperial dominions against possible revolt by vassal states. The vassal states had long been brought under control but the external problem of the north-west still remained unresolved. The growing power of the Uzbegs to the north-west of Chitral, the need for the defence of Kabul after its annexation and the death of Mirza Hakim and the danger from Persia through Kandahar and Baluchistan to the south, compelled Akbar even to give up his life-long obsession to destroy Mewar, recall all his generals from there and make Lahore the seat of his Government. There was added a new problem, which arose out of the ambition of the Mughals, right from Babur's time, not only to have Kabul but also the whole of central Asia to which they laid a hereditary claim from the great Timur.

Thus the North-West frontier as also the Himalayan frontier had to be guarded ; this had to be done by firm control over the tribal areas both by force and subsidy, by building a chain of forts and by stationing armies at the various outposts within the border areas. It is to the credit of Akbar's grasp of these problems and his method of solving them that his policy is still being maintained.

With the death of Mirza Hakim in July 1585, Kabul became for all practical purposes a province of the Empire. Akbar sent Mansing to Kabul as the Governor to keep that territory in check and Zain Khan Kokaltash to subdue the tribes on the border.

Zain Khan began his operations, first, by advancing in Bajaur region where the Yusufsai tribes with their three thousand families had made their homes. Zain Khan did not find it formidable to subjugate the Yusufsais. But difficulties started when he advanced further into the interior, in the region between Peshawar and the Swat river. That region was the home of the Mandar tribe, consisting of nearly 40,000 householders. In trying to subdue them, Zain Khan had, by the end of 1585, to wage as many as twenty-three fights destroying seven stockades built by the enemy. He could succeed only partially in bringing under control a part of this region but the Karkar defile and Buner district still remained unvanquished and hostile.

Constant action against the tribes and forced marches in hostile terrain left his army exhausted and Zain Khan had therefore to ask for reinforcements. When the question arose as to who should lead the auxiliary force, both Abul Fazl and Birbal entreated Akbar to be given the chance to lead the army, both anxious to earn the glamorous laurels of a military victory. Akbar drew lots not to offend either of his favourites. Birbal's name was drawn and he was made the commander of the force which was to march through Samab and enter the Swat country. Hakim Abul Fath, another favourite of the Emperor, and as inexperienced as Birbal in military matters, was also sent to enter Swat from further east from the neighbourhood of the Karkar Pass.

The three armies under Zain Khan, Birbal and Hakim Abul Fath joined after a while at Chakdara, a fort built by Zain Khan during his recent operations. Dissensions, however, broke out between the three generals and even hot words came to be exchanged between Birbal and Zain Khan. Being the favourite of Akbar, Birbal regarded himself as the supreme commander of the campaign. He had also a quarrel with his other colleague, the Hakim, which degenerated into an exchange of abuses.

Of the three generals, Zain Khan alone had any pretence to military experience. He tried to persuade his colleagues that the task of subjugating the turbulent tribes in that region was not an easy one as they seemed to think and that it would be an arduous and patient operation. He therefore counselled that a reserve force should be stationed at Chakdara to guard their rear and lines of communications and that another force should advance into the interior to chastise the tribes.

But Hakim Abul Fath and Birbal would have none of this advice. Both had come with hopes that there would be a battle ending in a quick victory with which they could return to their royal patron to receive his congratulations. They told Zain Khan that they had been sent to punish the enemy and not to guard the country. They insisted that all the three armies should combine in defeating the enemy and hasten back to the Court as soon as that task was over. Zain Khan, with his experience of tribal warfare during the last year, again insisted that the territory he had conquered after so much trouble should not be left unprotected. He also wanted that after advancing further in the interior they should return to Chakdara through Matakhand Pass and not by the Karkar defiles. His wise counsel fell on deaf ears. Not wishing to estrange the Emperor's favourites, Zain Khan said no more.[1]

On February 12, 1586, the three armies advanced from Chakdara to Karkar Pass and encamped at Kandak. Next day they advanced further and encamped half a *kos* away from the defile, their plan being to attack the enemy at the other end of the defile and then to retire.

The battle commenced on the third day. A number of tribesmen from the opposing ranks were captured, yet there was confusion among the Imperial forces, due mostly to the indiscipline amongst the men from Kabul, who gave themselves up to their favourite pastime of plundering the enemy territory. Fighting went on throughout the day and continued during that night and most of the following day. Zain Khan at last won. The tribesmen, nonetheless, managed to loot his camels and bullocks.

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[1] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 726-728.

Exulted with this success, the Imperial armies advanced further the next day and halted near Khanpur. Zain Khan once again advised caution against hasty operation and suggested that a wall should be built where they were and that they should fight from there the enemy who had taken possession of the heights of the pass. His colleagues, inexperienced in this kind of warfare, thought that the proper course was to rush through the defile, a matter of only a short distance to traverse. They brushed aside Zain Khan's warning that they could not safely march through the narrow pass with the enemy entrenched on the heights of that pass.

On February 16, 1586 they proceeded towards the Malandarai Pass. They had hardly passed the crest of that pass when the tribesmen launched a sudden attack from all sides. The tribesmen, stationed on the heights, mercilessly poured arrows and huge boulders on the Imperial forces below. Thus attacked, it was impossible for Zain Khan to proceed further. The only way to escape sure annihilation was to retire as best as he could saving as many of his men as possible.

Darkness soon enveloped the valley. Zain Khan managed to extricate himself from the death trap into which his colleagues had led him. He ordered his men to withdraw. But the retreat resulted in terrible loss. Those who remained in the valley met their death in utter helplessness. Those who tried to get out lost their way in the darkness. The fierce tribesmen who knew every inch of the territory, pursued them under cover of the night and ruthlessly killed them.

The action was a total disaster. Abul Fazl estimated the loss at 500, but there were others who estimated it at a larger figure. Amongst those who perished were Birbal himself and a number of officers.[2] Badaoni thought that at least 8,000 men and even more lost their lives during that fateful night. He must have derived profuse solace from the death of Birbal, his enemy at the court, the one who had seduced the Emperor into heterodox and wicked paths. " Bir Bar also " he notes " who had fled from fear of his life was slain and entered the row of dogs in the hell and thus got something for the abominable deeds he had done during his lifetime."[3]

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[2] Ibid, 731-732.

Akbar was stricken with grief when the news of the disaster reached him. The death of Birbal, his merry companion, whose witty jokes and amusing ditties had delighted him for so long, caused him deep and genuine, anguish. Birbal, for whom he had built with such loving care so exquisite a house in the Palace grounds at Fathpur, the only Hindu grandee who subscribed to his Divine Faith, his spiritual companion, would no more be there to enliven his melancholy hours. So intense was his grief that he declined to touch food and water for two days and nights. Only Mariam Makani, seeing affliction in her son's heart could console him and induce him to resume his normal life.[4]

There were quite a few at the Court, besides Badaoni who could not conceal their malice against the dead courtier. Was it not upon him that the Emperor had showered favours upon favours ? Was he not responsible in no small measure for leading the Emperor astray from the true faith ? There were others who resented that Akbar should show so much grief over the death of Birbal alone when a number of other officers had lost their lives in that very battle. Many grandees, wrote Badaoni, were killed in this disaster but "His Majesty cared for the death of no grandee more than that of Bir Bar." "Alas !" he said, " they could not even get his body out of the Pass, that it might have been burned, but at last he consoled himself with the thought that Bir Bar was now free and independent of all earthly fetters and as the rays of the sun were sufficient for him there was no necessity that he should be cleansed by fire."[5] The sarcasm of Badaoni was aimed at Birbal's faith in Sun-worship.

Born in Kalpi in 1528, of poor Brahmin parents, Birbal's original name was Maheshdas. A poet of considerable merit, he composed verses in Hindi under the pen-name of Brahma Das. Though his verses were read and sung widely and numerous witty stories and ditties are still credited to his name, no authentic work of his is known to exist. His gifts as a musician, a poet, a story teller and a witty conversationalist soon attracted the attention of Akbar. Though the Emperor sent him on several diplomatic missions, he does not seem to have held any particular post. Nagarkot was assigned to him as a fief, but as the Fort was not conquered, Birbal remained throughout at the Court. Later in his life he was given Kalanjar as a jagir.

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[3] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 361-362.
[4] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 732-734.
[5] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 361-362.

He took active part in the discussions in the *Ibadatkhana* where the Emperor exploited his ready wit and sharp repartee against the orthodox party. Deeply devoted to Vaishnavism and the cult of Sun-worship, his personal sway over Akbar helped Mehervanji Rana, the Zoroastrian theologian to induce the Emperor to worhsip the Sun and the fire.

It was a grievous mistake on the part of the Emperor to have entrusted the command of an army in the difficult tribal warfare to two courtiers who could claim no military experience. To determine the question of command by the hazardous method of lots was indeed asking for certain disaster and it placed Zain Khan Kokaltash in an extremely embarrassing situation. Under the stress of the loss of a personal friend, the Emperor was not at first able to see his own error. In an angry mood, he even censured Zain Khan and Hakim Abul Fath and declared his intention to lead the army personally and to avenge the death of Birbal.

He was at last persuaded to desist from such a course and to send instead Prince Murad and Todermal.[6] A fresh army was got ready. At the last minute Akbar changed his mind and left the command in the capable hands of Todermal.

Realising the hazards of such a venture, Todermal marched without haste, advancing further only after he had entrenched his position by building a number of forts as he went along. He planned a double attack on the tribes. Mansingh who was then the Governor of Kabul was directed to march against the Roshniyas, a large sect among these tribes led by one Bayazid, a religious fanatic and his son Jalala. Bayazid claimed to be a prophet. He had no use for the Koran for he preached that nothing existed in reality except God.[7] Mansingh slew many of these Roshniyas, captured still more of them and sold them as slaves in Turan and Persia.[8]

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[6] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 737.

Notwithstanding these expeditions the tribes still clung to their turbulent and nomadic life and continued to resist all attempts to subdue them even during the reigns of Akbar's successors.

In September 1586, Mansingh, advanced against the Tarikis of Tirah, a hilly district to the west of Peshawar. In the midst of the action he was suddenly recalled and Zain Khan, again restored to favour, was appointed in his place.

The recall of Mansingh led to fresh disturbances in Swat. Zain Khan had therefore to be sent to Swat and Sadiq Khan to Tirah. Inspite of reinforcements sent to these generals and their penetrations into the tribal areas, the tribes, chiefly the Afridis and the Yuzufzai, could not be completely put down. Ultimately Sadiq Khan, realising the futility of incessant warfare, " opened the tongue of conciliation and the hand of liberality."

In Swat, Zain Khan was a little more successful. His campaign lasted nearly eight months during which time he gradually built a series of forts from where he could render these mountianous passes safe.[9]

Throughout these campaigns Akbar had kept himself at Attock watching keenly the work of his generals in these hilly regions. The Uzbeg danger was still threatening. He believed that it would not cease until Kandahar was reconquered. The Emperor therefore started on August 31, 1589 and reached Kabul on September 21.

Northern India was not yet entirely under his sway. Sind and Baluchistan were still outside the pale of Imperial dominions. The island of Bhakkar had already been annexed in 1574 but a large part of southern Sind was still independent. It was impossible therefore to make any move to take Kandahar leaving these areas independent. Their conquest was a necessary prelude and Akbar now focussed his attention in that direction.

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[7] Smith, Akbar, 238; Ishwari Prasad, A short history of Muslim Rule in India, 354.

[8] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 362; A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 737.

[9] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 806, 811.

Akbar seems to have given considerable importance to this expedition for he appointed Mirza Abdur Rahim as the Governor of Multan and as the leader of the expedition to Sind. As originally planned, the march to Kandahar was to be through Baluchistan. It was decided that if the Baluchis gave passage without opposition their lands were to be given back to them, otherwise they were to be annexed. A part of the army was also to march against Jani Beg, the ruler of southern Sind. They were at first to temporise with him until Kandahar and Baluchistan were won and then to deal with him properly on their return journey.[10]

Mirza Abdur Rahim seems, however, to have induced Akbar to change the plan and to allow him to attack Sind first. The pretext for such an attack was ready at hand for Jani Beg had failed to attend the Court at Lahore. Once the plan was decided upon there was no delay in its execution. The army was quickly assembled and before Jani Beg could know what was happening, Abdur Rahim had already entered Sind. Jani Beg, in trying to defend his kingdom, fought two well-contested battles near the fort of Sihwan. The Khan-Khanan answered him with flotillas of boats. Jani Beg's army at last fled and he was forced to surrender. During this expedition Umarkot, the Emperor's birthplace, was captured and annexed to the Empire.

Jani Beg was produced before Akbar. Through the good offices of Mirza Abdur Rahim, he was treated with liberality and consideration. Sind was restored to him though as a fief and the erstwhile ruler was made a *Mansabdar* of 5,000. The generous policy of the Emperor paid good dividend for Jani Beg became so ardent a disciple of the Divine Faith that he made a declaration that he would abjure his religion if it conflicted with loyalty to the person of the Emperor.

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[10] Ibid, 886, 887.

These successes made considerable impression on Abdullah Uzbeg. Convinced of the futility of contending against so powerful a neighbour as Akbar and finding that the subjugation of the border areas by Akbar made any help from the tribes impossible, the Uzbeg chief opened negotiations and sent his envoy to Akbar. The year 1594 saw the conquest of Sibi Fort near Kandahar itself. The whole of the north upto Kandahar now became part of the Imperial dominions and the danger of any possible attack from the north-west disappeared.

Akbar treated the problem of the tribal area and Kashmir with only one object, the guarding of the North-west frontier. Hence it was that he commenced operations in Kashmir simultaneously with those in Swat and Baluchistan.

Preparations for the annexation of Kashmir had long since been set on foot. As early as 1582 the Emperor had started diplomatic infiltration. During that year he had sent Shaikh Yakub Kashmiri as his ambassador to Sultan Yusuf Khan, the Afghan ruler of Kashmir. The Shaikh knew Kashmiri language and was therefore a useful emissary for making contacts with the local leaders.

The next move was more definite. In 1585 when Akbar was in the Punjab he sent Hakim Ali and Bahauddin to Sultan Yusuf Khan with a message that he should come to the Court or send his son Yakub Khan. When Akbar reached Rawalpindi, the two envoys returned and reported that the Kashmir ruler was in no mood to follow either of the courses suggested. Akbar therefore ordered an expedition to be sent against Kashmir.

In December 1585, the expedition started under Raja Bhagwandas, Kasim Khan, the Imperial engineer, Shah Quli Mahram, Shaikh Yakub Kashmiri and others.[11] In January 1586 the Imperial forces in spite of several difficulties reached Pakli via the Baramulla Pass. Finding that resistance to Bhagwandas would be futile, Yusuf Khan decided to submit. On February 14, 1586 he met the Raja and the other Imperial generals.

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[11] Ibid, 717.

Akbar's instruction was that the Kashmiri ruler should be received with consideration and sent to Court. If the ruler put up no resistance to the Mughal army, he should be given back the country as a fief.

Yusuf's son, Yakub, organised opposition against the Imperial forces with the help of some Kashmiri leaders and fortified the Bulias Pass on the Baramulla route.[12] A few skirmishes took place between the two opposing armies but Shaikh Yakub Kashmiri managed to induce the local landholders to submit and to agree to allow the Imperial army to pass through their villages.[13]

In the meantime Bhagwandas heard the news of Zain Khan's defeat and the tragedy of Karkar Pass. His own provisions began to run short and it was difficult for his army to proceed as rain and snow had begun to fall.

An agreement was therefore patched up which gave easy terms to the Kashmir ruler. The ruler agreed that the *Khutbah* should be read in Akbar's name, the Emperor's name should be stamped on the coins, and the mint, the cultivation of saffron and shawl production should be under the direct control and supervision of the Imperial officers. Sultan Yusuf Khan was to be restored to his throne.

Akbar did not approve of these terms finding that Kashmir had eluded from his grasp. But he did not repudiate the treaty.

By the end of March 1586 Sultan Yusuf and his son Yakub, escorted by Bhagwandas, came to the Court at Attock where the Emperor was. The opinion prevalent in the Court was clearly hostile to the treaty made by Bhagwandas. Akbar, who had reluctantly given consent to the terms, agreed with his amirs' view that Kashmir should first be conquered and then if necessary bestowed on Yusuf as a fief.

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[12] Smith, Akbar, 239.

[13] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 723, 725.

When Bhagwandas ushered his Kashmiri guests before Akbar, the Emperor ordered them to be handed over to the custody of Todermal who had returned that very day from his successful campaign in Swat.[14]

This was clearly a faithless act committed rashly in violation of the terms agreed upon and consented to by the Emperor. It perturbed Raja Bhagwandas who had promised Yusuf Khan safe return to Kashmir. The Raja felt his own helplessness against such a flagrant breach of faith so galling that in utter despair he stabbed himself with a dagger. Luckily the injury did not prove mortal. Even Badaoni testifies that the Raja took such a desperate step to vindicate his personal honour finding that Akbar even contemplated to have Yusuf Khan killed.[15] The official explanation, of course, was that the Raja stabbed himself in a fit of insane frenzy.

Meanwhile Yakub Khan, whom Akbar had granted a mean stipend of Rs. 30 to 40 a month, got alarmed, seeing his father's fate. Finding that Akbar was preparing to send another expedition to Kashmir he managed to escape and reached Kashmir, where he prepared for resistance. This was just what Akbar wanted and he at once ordered Kasim Khan to proceed against Kashmir.

The official excuses trotted out by Abul Fazl were the failure of Kashmir to fulfil the terms of the treaty and insubordination shown by Yakub Khan. The real fact was that Haider Kak, an influential Kashmiri leader, who had come over to the Imperial side and Shaikh Yakub had assured the Emperor that the Kashmiri leaders would side with him.[16]

About the end of 1586, Kasim Khan started with his army and reached Bhimbher on the 1st September. "Fortune," says Nizamuddin Ahmad significantly, "fought with the Imperial army and the stone of dissension was cast among the Kashmiris."[17] Salim, the *Faujdar* of Bhimbher, after some hesitation, left Yakub Khan and joined the Imperial general. In Rajauri also, the Nayiks of the Pass came to Kasim Khan and paid their homage stating that the local leaders were awaiting the arrival of the Imperial army.

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[14] Ibid, 739.
[15] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 364.
[16] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 752.

There were two possible routes avaiable to Kasim Khan, the Karpartal and the Pir Panjal. Kasim Khan preferred the former as it was more open. Since the efforts of Yakub Khan to resist the invaders had not the full support of his own people, Kasim Khan did not encounter any serious resistance. The Imperial army made an easy entry into Srinagar.

Yakub Khan, thoroughly dispirited, fled to Desu in the mountains and raised, as best as he could, a force to fight the Mughal army. His small force, however, had no chance against Kasim Khan. Emboldened by this easy victory, Kasim Khan pursued him in the mountains and gave no respite to the Kashmiri prince.

Worn out and in despair at last, Yakub surrendered to Kasim Khan.[18] He was taken into custody and ordered to be sent as a prisoner to Bihar in charge of Mansingh who was the Governor there, to share the miseries of confinement with his father. Kashmir was thus annexed to the Empire and made a part of the province of Kabul.

Having got the coveted valley of Kashmir, Akbar started from Lahore on April 22, 1589 and, travelling via Bimbher and crossing the Pir Panjal range by the road which Kasim Khan had improvised for him, reached Srinagar on the 6th June. In a specially-built house-boat, he enjoyed the excursion to Mararaj and from there went up to Nandimarg and to the beautiful springs of Alanj. While passing Baramulla he came across a gate erected by the ancient Kashmir rulers between the hill on one side and the Bhimbher river on the other.[19] It was through this very stone-gate that, according to Beveridge, the famous Chinese traveller Huen Tsiang had passed. The end of August 1589 saw Akbar back in Attock after a pleasant and satisfying sojourn in Kashmir.

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[17] Nizamuddin Tabakat-i-Akbari in Ell & Daw, V, 454.
[18] Ibid, 454.
[19] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 847.

In August 1592 Akbar started on a hunting expedition along the Chinab river with the object of paying a second visit to Kashmir. On the way he received the news that Yadgar, the cousin of Yusuf Khan, had rebelled and set himself up as a Sultan, minting his own coins and bestowing titles on his followers. Yadgar was of course banking on the fact that during the rains and the winter the Imperial army would not be able to come to Kashmir.

When he heard of the approaching army under Akbar himself, he lost his nerve and protested that he was both loyal and innocent. Realising that his plea of innocence made no impression, he sent his general, Darvesh Ali, to oppose the Imperial army in the passes. Darvesh Ali could not put up any fight against Akbar's vanguard and Karpartal Pass was soon recovered by the Mughals. On September 12, 1592 the Imperial vanguard reached Hirapur where Yadgar, summoning up all his courage, had come to offer battle. His army was quickly disposed of. Yadgar himself was killed while he was concealing himself in a brushwood during his flight. Mathradas, an Imperial officer, brought his head post-haste and laid it before Akbar who was then near Bhimbher.[20]

The rebellion having been quelled, Akbar converted the whole of Kashmir into crown lands and appointed Khwaja Shamsuddin to administer them. From thence this northern valley came to be treated as the private garden of the Mughal emperors. Akbar remained in Srinagar during the festival of Diwali and celebrated his victory over Kashmir by having several house-boats promenade in the river and the banks of the river and the roofs of the houses overlooking the river illuminated with lights.[21]

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[20] Ibid, 950, 954.
[21] Ibid, 960.

After a few weeks' stay in Kashmir, interspersed with pleasant excursions in the surrounding country, the Emperor returned to Lahore to receive the highly gratifying news that Raja Mansingh had completely beaten the Afghan chiefs of Orissa and augmented the Imperial domains with that part of the country. Orissa lost its independent status and became part of the Suba of Bengal under Mansingh.

Though Kashmir had been acquired, the Emperor had, in the meantime lost two of his best advisers. In November, 1589 Raja Bhagwandas died. He was one of the first Rajput chiefs to cast his lot with Akbar. The marriage of his sister with Akbar and of his daughter with the heir-apparent had brought him and his family into close relationship with the royal family. He had served the Emperor with loyalty in many a battle. He held a *Mansab* of 5,000 and bore at the time of his death the lofty title of Amir-ul-Umara, the premier noble. He built a noble temple dedicated to Lord Hari at Mathura.[22] In his death the Emperor lost not only an intimate relation but a trusted adviser and an able general.

Akbar lost yet another tried counsellor when only five days before Bhagwandas died, Raja Todermal breathed his last. Originally in the service of Sher Shah, this Khatri of Lahore had started his career at the bottom of the ladder. By sheer dint of merit and industry, he gradually rose to the highest position of Prime Minister under Akbar. After holding various subordinate posts, he was given in 1573 the first important assignment of settling the revenue assessment of Gujarat in which he showed his special talents. He was a versatile grandee at the Court, an able general, an astute diplomat and a skilful finance and revenue minister. He fought under Munim Khan in Bengal against Daud and again in Gujarat against Sultan Muzaffar. When the revolt of officers broke out in Bengal, it was to this trusted officer that Akbar turned. In 1577-1578 he was appointed to the post of Imperial *Vazir*, a post which no Hindu except Hemu had so far held under Muslim rulers. The appointment caused so much stir in the immediate circles of the Emperor that even Akbar was compelled to defend his choice. His integrity and ability, however, were of such a high order that none regretted the choice.

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[22] The Mauthir-ul-Umara, Tr. Beveridge & Beni Prasad, I, 405.

Todermal had the sagacity and foresight to see the unifying effects of a common language for the entire administration. With that end in view he made Persian the language of all records compelling the Hindu officers who held most of the subordinate posts in towns and villages to learn and adopt that language as their own.

What has immortalised him is the system of revenue assessment and land survey which he evolved, a system which drew an equitable balance between the demands of the State and the needs of the subject. Though the Mughal dynasty died out, the system he introduced remained and was followed both by the Marathas and in a large degree by the British.

Such was the confidence he evoked by a life of devotion to duty and sincerity of purpose that, when Akbar left Lahore to pay a hurried visit to Kashmir in 1589, he left the capital in charge of this Hindu Minister. Even Abul Fazl, who did not altogether admire Todermal and criticised the Raja's orthodoxy, declared that the Raja was incomparable in courage, administrative ability and freedom from avarice, a common vice amongst the officers in the Mughal administration. Throughout his tenure of office the Raja watched every detail of the administration with a meticulous care which prevented many a corrupt revenue officer from exacting illegitimate imposts from the peasantry.

His staunch adherence to Hinduism was well-known. In 1578, Todermal was accompanying Akbar when the latter went to the Punjab from Ajmer. During the journey, the Raja lost his beloved idols in the bustle of the march. The Raja gave up his food and sleep. Until he found them again and performed his daily devotional rites, he declined to resume his duties.

A few weeks before his death, he wrote to the Emperor that he had grown aged and should be relieved of duties and permitted to retire to Hardwar where he would seek spiritual solace through prayer and meditation. Akbar granted his wishes and the Raja left Lahore for Hardwar. The Emperor however changed his mind and revoked his previous order exhorting the Raja that no amount of meditation would give him solace as the care of the weak and the needy. The Raja obeyed and resumed his duties but died in Lahore on November 21, 1589.[23] His famous colleague Raja Bhagwandas attended his cremation ceremony. Five days passed and he too died in Lahore. The successive deaths of these two prominent personalities left a great void in the Council of the Emperor.

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[23] Mauthir-ul-Umara, Tr. Beveridge & Beni Prasad, II, 954.

CHAPTER XIV

CONQUEST OF THE DECCAN

For a long time Akbar had been casting covetous eyes on the Sultanates of the Deccan. The whole of Northern India with Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Sind and Kashmir had already been brought under the Imperial sway. There was perhaps justification in Akbar's wars of annexation so long as they were confined to regions in the north and even in the east. It was essential for him to guard the north-west frontier against any possible danger to his kingdom. It was equally essential that he must not leave any serious antagonist either in the Gangetic plain or in Rajputana, who could attack him from the rear whilst he was engaged in any earnest combat in the north-west. The entire north therefore had to be not only subdued but annexed and consolidated.

But, if there was any justification for wars in the north, there was none for them in the Deccan. The reports brought by his envoys about the internecine feuds amongst the Deccan Kingdoms and their consequent enfeeblement must have been too tempting for the conqueror's appetite in Akbar for more and more territory.

In October-November 1573, when Mahomed Hussain Mirza fled to the Deccan during the first expedition against Gujarat, Akbar had sent Mir Muhsin Rizvi of Mashad on an embassy to the Deccan. The diplomatic efforts of Rizvi prevented the Mirza from obtaining refuge in Ahmednagar. When Rizvi returned to Fathpur, he reported the rivalries prevailing among the several kingdoms in the Deccan. Akbar stayed his hands then, for the Eastern Provinces had yet to be conquered.

The Deccan kingdoms, however, were never out of his mind. In 1577 he sent another envoy to Ahmednagar but the Nizam-ul-Mulk pacified the Emperor with munificent gifts of elephants and other presents.[1] An opportunity soon arose for Akbar's intervention. Quarrels broke out between Nizam-ul-Mulk and his brother Burhan-ul-Mulk. The latter fled from the wrath of the Ahmednagar ruler and came over to Qutbuddin Khan, the Governor of Malwa. Such a royal refugee would be a useful tool in the dexterous hands of the Emperor who lost no time in summoning him to the Court.[2]

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[1] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 288.

Now that there was no danger from the North, the Emperor began to take definite measures for the subjugation of the South. As a preliminary measure, he sent in August 1591 four embassies to the Deccan; Shaikh Faizi to Ali Khan, the ruler of Khandesh, Mahomed Amin to Ahmednagar where Burhan-ul-Mulk had by now succeeded his brother, Mir Mahomed Amin to Adil Khan of Bijapur and Mir Munir to Golconda.[3]

These envoys returned by the end of 1593[4] reporting that none of these rulers was prepared to submit to the Imperial suzerainty. Diplomacy having failed, Akbar decided to use force. He appointed Prince Danial to lead the expedition in the Deccan but changed his mind on second thought. The Prince had hardly left Lahore when Akbar recalled him and appointed in his place Mirza Abdur Rahim to command the invading force.[5]

Ahmednagar, that premier kingdom in the Deccan, was rent with internecine feuds and dissensions at this crucial time. Burhan-ul-Mulk had appointed his son Ibrahim to succeed him but his general Ikhlas Khan, a powerful Abyssinian, who controlled the entire army, broke with Burhan and put up another son Ismail as a rival successor. Faced with this situation, Burhan was obliged to fight against his own army just outside the walls of Ahmednagar. He was lucky enough to defeat the recalcitrant general. Misfortune however dogged Burhan, for in April 1595 he died as a result of having taken some medicine from a quack doctor. The atmosphere in Ahmednagar was surcharged with intrigue and suspicion. Rumours were set afloat that his sister Chandbibi, who was soon to acquire fame as the heroic defender of Ahmednagar, had poisoned him.

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[2] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 334.
[3] Ibid, 390.
[4] Smith, Akbar, 248.
[5] Ferishta, History of the Mahomedan Power, Tr. Briggs II, 269.

Ibrahim succeeded his father but his first act was to have his brother Ismail blinded and killed.[6] This was hardly a good augury for the new ruler. Dissensions soon broke out in Ahmednagar itself and also between Ibrahim and Adil Shah of Bijapur. On August 16, 1595 a battle was fought hardly 40 *kos* from Ahmednagar between Ibrahim and the Bijapur forces in which a chance arrow took the life of Ibrahim. Ibrahim was succeeded by Ahmed who claimed to be the son of Khudaband, one of the sons of Burhan. Ahmed however was on the throne for a short time and was succeeded by Bahadur, the son of Ibrahim.[7]

Such was the state of affairs when Abdur Rahim marched to Mandu in the first stage towards the Deccan. Luckily for Ahmednagar, it was not fair weather in the Imperial camp also. Prince Murad who was jealous of Abdur Rahim and disliked him, had his own designs on the Deccan. As the Governor of Gujarat he thought that it was within his jurisdiction to undertake this project and to win the laurels of victory in the Deccan. Without, therefore, even informing the Khan Khanan, who was the duly accredited leader of the invading army and to forestall him, Murad marched from Gujarat with an army towards Ahmednagar.

At Chand, a fort not far off from Ahmednagar, the two Imperial forces converged. The meeting between the two leaders was far from cordial. Quarrels soon broke out between Sadiq Khan and Shahbaz Khan, the respective advisers of Murad and the Khan Khanan.[8] The two armies, nonetheless, advanced towards their goal. By the time they reached the neighbourhood of Ahmednagar, Adil Khan, the ruler of Khandesh, came out of Burhanpur with a force of 6,000 horses and tendered his services to the Imperial forces against his neighbour. He was rewarded with the fief of

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[6] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 1025.
[7] Ibid, 1029.
[8] Ibid, 1046, 1048, 1050.

Nandurbar for this unprovoked, unfriendly act towards his neighbour.[9]

On December 12, 1595 the Imperial forces laid siege to the fort of Ahmednagar. Chandbibi, as the regent of the minor Bahadur, undertook the defence of the fort. According to customary methods, the Imperial army opened trenches, carved out approaches to the fort, erected batteries and laid mines near the walls of the fort.

Chandbibi defended the fort with astonishing gallantry and resolution. She wrote beseeching letters for help to Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur, her nephew, for whom also she had not long ago acted as the regent during his minority. A similar appeal for help was addressed by her to Qutub Shah of Golconda exhorting him to establish a united front of the Southerners against the common foe.

For three months the invaders struggled hard against the heroic resistance put up by Chandbibi and her followers. At long last the invaders were able to carry five mines to the foot of the walls and the bastions of the fort. Two of them were, however, destroyed by Chandbibi's men. On February 17, 1596, Murad and Sadiq Khan, without informing the Khan Khanan, obviously with the idea of gaining credit of taking the fort for themselves lighted the mines. The three mines laid by them exploded making a breach of about 30 yards in the wall. The Imperial forces tarried however, waiting for the other two mines to explode, not knowing that they had been already destroyed by the garrison.

Taking advantage of the delay, Chandbibi brought out her guns, herself taking part in the defence and she successfully repulsed the repeated attacks of the Imperial forces who, in wave after wave tried to rush into the fort. She stood firm and resolute that night personally directing the repairs to the broken wall. Before the sun rose, she had the breach in the wall filled up with wood, stones, earth and even corpses. During the long siege, she had not been content with a mere negative defence. she had organised attacking parties under two of her captains, Shah Ali and Abhang Khan both bold and adventurous. These parties, by surprise attacks under cover of darkness, had often broken through the forces of the Khan Khanan in their entrenchments.

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[9] Ibid, 1044; Ferishta, History of the Mahomedan Power, Tr. Briggs, II. 271.

Murad's efforts to rush into the fort had completely failed. The Imperial generals now learnt that a large army under Suheil Khan, the Bijapur general, was fast approaching to help Chandbibi. Matters were not going the way the Imperialists had hoped. There were open quarrels between the two Mughal generals. In his hurry to earn easy laurels, Murad had left the roads behind him unprotected. The country around Chand had been unsubdued. The omission to take such elementary precautions enabled Chandbibi's men to indulge in night attacks on the invaders from the rear and to prevent supplies coming from Gujarat.

Both Murad and the Mirza in these circumstances considered it prudent to welcome any negotiations that might emanate from the garrison.[10] Chandbibi also realised that she could not fight single-handed against such a mighty foe and finding welcome response from the opposite side she made proposals which were accepted with surprising alacrity. Bahadur was accepted as the Nizam-ul-mulk though under the paramountcy of Akbar. Berar was conceded to the Emperor. To gratify him further, elephants, jewels and other precious gifts were sent to him as presents.[11]

The treaty, thus patched up, had to be accepted because of the conflicts that existed between the two Imperial generals and their advisers. Shahbaz Khan, enraged at the indignity shown to him by Murad at the instigation of Sadiq Khan, left the army and in a huff retired to Malwa.[12] From the point of view of the Mughals the expedition had ended in a fiasco. Akbar must have felt that with a little more unity and coordination between his two generals, the fort could

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10. Ferishta, History of the Mahomedan Power, Tr. Briggs, II, 272, 273.
11. A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 1050.
12. Ferishta, History of the Mahomedan Power, Tr. Briggs, II, 273.

well have been taken. But he had to thank himself for allowing Murad, a person of overweening pride and given to drink, to interfere with the Khan Khanan in such a difficult venture.

Once the immediate danger had disappeared the unity that Chandbibi had managed to forge in Ahmednagar also vanished. Intriguers were not wanting in Ahmednagar and these, under the leadership of one Nehung Khan, denounced the treaty and Chandbibi herself. They succeeded in overthrowing her authority, ungrateful of the gallant part she had played in the defence of the realm. Contrary to her advice and in violation of the treaty, they marched into Berar with an army of 50,000 men to expel the Mughals from there. The Khan Khanan, who had his headquarters in Berar, advanced with a force of 20,000 horses on the banks of the Godavari. Suheil Khan had, in the meantime, joined the Ahmednagar forces with his contingent from Bijapur and had taken over the command of the Southern armies. The rival armies fought an action at Supa in which the Khan Khanan not only suffered a serious defeat but lost Ali Khan of Khandesh and Raja Ramchand of Pannah. The Mughal general had the misfortune also to lose 3,000 of his men on the field.

Suheil Khan was now the master of the field. The Khan Khanan, engaged throughout the day, had not been aware that his centre and left wings had been completely routed by the Bijapur general. He had gone in pursuit of some of the Deccani forces who had been separated from the main army. Night fell on the field leaving each of the general under the belief that he had won the action.

Returning to the filed from his pursuit, the Khan Khanan unexpectedly came upon Suheil Khan and his men, realising to his dismay then only that the main part of his army had fled from the field. Undaunted by the disaster, the Mirza nonetheless, resolved to give fight even with the depleted force that he had. The two armies resumed fight although it was pitch dark, not being able even to distinguish between friend and foe, each anxiously waiting for the dawn to break.

When morning broke upon them, Suheil Khan advanced with his 12,000 troops on the Khan Khanan who had only 3 to 4 thousand men with him. The action was fought with intense ferocity, the rival captains being men of courage and bravery. Suheil Khan fought hard, receiving several wounds and at last collapsed from his horse. Finding themselves leaderless, his men started fleeing from the battleground. The battle came to an abrupt end. The Khan Khanan was in no condition to pursue the enemy and thought it better to return to Shahpur, content with the face-saving victory that he had just been able to snatch.

But the animosity that Sadiq Khan had fanned between Murad and the Khan Khanan did not abate. The Emperor at long last decided to amend his error of having left the campaign to two men who could not see eye to eye. The man who was censured, however, was not the Prince but the Khan Khanan who was recalled. Akbar in the meantime had heard lurid tales of the wild drinking bouts of his son. But Murad was not near him that he could be advised. The only thing he could do was to despatch Yusuf Khan Mashudy and his trusted friend Abul Fazl to Murad. The new generals, no doubt, recovered a few places in Berar but could do nothing effective to win either the Deccan or restrain the Prince from his drinking bouts. In May 1599 Murad fell seriously ill due chiefly to excessive drinking and died. The Khan Khanan was once again restored to favour. His daughter Jani Begum was married to Prince Danial and, with this matrimonial alliance as a cementing factor between the two, Danial and the Khan Khanan were despatched to the Deccan.[13]

In 1598 Akbar learnt of the death of his ambitious rival, Abdullah Khan Uzbeg. It relieved him at last of the anxiety of a possible invasion of India from the north-west, which had kept him for well-nigh fifteen years at Lahore. Abdullah Khan had come to the throne of Bokhara in 1556, the same year that Akbar succeeded Humayun. A great warrior, the leader of the wild Uzbegs had gradually extended his sway till he became the master of Badakhshan, Hirat

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13. Ibid, 276, 277.

and Mashad. His formidable army remained for more than a decade a serious menace to Akbar's empire. For the last fifteen years it was this meance that had been the determining factor in the North-west policy of the Emperor. With the death of the powerful Uzbeg, Akbar was free from the apprehensions of a Tartar invasion. There was now nothing to stop him from pursuing a vigorous policy in the Deccan.

November 6th 1598 saw Akbar leaving Lahore for Agra. The insubordinate and irresponsible conduct on the part of his sons kept him in Agra for several months. Only in July 1599 could he start on his campaign for the Deccan. He left Agra in charge of Salim with orders that the Prince should march against Amarsingh of Mewar. Salim had, however, other things to think of rather than undertake so hazardous an assignment as the expedition in an unhospitable country.

Referring to these orders of his father, Salim wrote later " In the end of his reign, on the same day and hour that he proceeded to the conquest of the Deccan he sent me with a large army and reliable Sardars against the Rana." Salim does not mention, however, as to why he did not comply with these orders but simply glosses over the matter saying that " by chance these two affairs, for reasons it would be too long to recount, did not succeed."[14] The truth of the matter was that Salim was getting restive at having to wait, what appeared to him to be an indefinite period, to succeed to the throne of his father. Prince Danial, he suspected, was being unduly favoured by his father. Already unfilial and treasonable thoughts had begun to take roots in his mind.

Meanwhile, unexpected complications had arisen in the Deccan. Contrary to all expectations, Miran Bahadur Khan, who succeeded Ali Khan in Khandesh, showed defiance. Relying on the strength and the impregnability of the famous fort of Asirgarh he locked himself up in that fort refusing to acknowledge the Emperor's overlordship. Akbar therefore directed Danial and the Khan Khanan to advance

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14. Jehangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Tr. Rogers & Beveridge, I, 251.

against Ahmednagar while he decided to lead personally the expedition against Asirgarh.

Burhanpur, the capital of Khandesh, had been left unprotected by Bahadur. Akbar could therefore take the capital without any opposition and make his headquarters there leaving the capture of Asirgarh to Khan Azam.

Asirgarh lay on the main road from the Deccan to the North. In the 16th century this fort was considered to be one of the strongest forts in India and indeed a wonder of the world.[15] The hill on which it was built was on a spur of the Satpura range, about 900 feet above the plain below. The main fort itself was surrounded by three subsidiary forts, the *mali*, *antar mali* and *koshi*. No other fort, testifies Abul Fazl, could have so much provisions, guns and equipment.[16] The summit of the hill, a space of about 60 acres in extent, was amply provided with water from several reservoirs and except at two points access to that summit was barred by inaccessible cliffs. Stores and provisions were collected by ruler after ruler which would last the garrison for at least ten years.[17]

The preliminary attack on the fort was entrusted to Shaikh Farid of Bokhara and Abul Fazl. But Akbar had not brought with him the necessary equipment, his big guns and batteries, not anticipating that Bahadur would put up an obstinate resistance. The siege, therefore, was for a time reduced to a mere blockade.

The official version as narrated by Abul Fazl was that the outlying fortress, Maligarh, a cunning device of fortification of the main fort, was first captured during the preliminary attack. Bahadur thereupon sent an envoy to Shaikh Farid and Abul Fazl, agreeing to submit on the condition, which even according to Abul Fazl, Bahadur insisted that Asirgarh and the country surrounding it should be restored to him and the prisoners released. According to Abul Fazl owing to the long blockade and the capture of Maligarh, all exits from the main fort had been closed resulting in a dreadful pestilence breaking out in the fort. But even he admits that Akbar himself proposed at the instance of some of his advisers that Bahadur should appear before him, acknowledge his suzerainty and then Asirgarh and the country surrounding it should be restored to him. The next day Bahadur, it would appear against the wishes of the leaders of the garrison, descended from the fort and met Shaikh Farid in his camp where he was virtually made a captive.

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[15] Smith, Akbar, 272.
[16] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 1168.
[17] Smith, Akbar, 273.

The garrison, however, was not in a mood to give up the defence and Abul Fazl had to be given leave to attack the fort. Realising however the futility of such an attack, the Imperialists started enticing the leaders of the garrison to accept the proposals. These methods, obviously of bribery and corruption, at last succeeded. The besieged garrison listened to these proposals but even then insisted that they should have an order from Bahadur permitting them to surrender the fort. They also insisted that the Emperor should give them an assurance that their lives, property and honour whould be safe. This assurance was given readily.

Bahadur had already regretted his impetuous and unthinking step of leaving the safety of his fort and relying too readily on the assurances of Shaikh Farid and Abul Fazl. He realised that these assurances were not to be honoured and hesitated to give the written permission which his people demanded. But he was already in the clutches of his enemy. It was too late for him now to refuse to give the document. Even Abul Fazl admitted that pressure had to be brought on him and he was compelled to give the requisite writing with his seal. It is easy to see the kind of pressure that must have been brought to bear upon this credulous prince to extort from him an unwilling consent. Akbar's own assurance and Bahadur's permission were then sent to the fort. Even then those who had been won over by the Emperor's gold had to parley for four days with the rest of the garrison. They at last succeeded. The gates of the invincible fort were flung open. As many as 34,000 men with their families cooped up for months within the fort walls came out. The keys of the fort were surrendered to the agents of Akbar.

The official version insisted that 25,000 persons had perished in the fort as a result of the pestilence and that it was this huge mortality that had compelled the garrison to surrender. This version is obviously not correct for there is no evidence of any large-scale pestilence having broken out in the fort.

Bahadur in the meantime had been sent to the Court at Burhanpur. The solemn assurances given to him and to the garrison by the Emperor himself did not save him from being despatched to the fortress of Gwalior as a prisoner so that "he might get some enlightenment in the school of the prison."[18] So wrote Abul Fazl with unbecoming glee. Akbar's act was a complete betrayal of the agreement to which he was a party. Worse, it was a breach of solemn assurance he had personally given.

The unofficial version of this unsavoury episode has fortunately survived. Based on the letters of Fr. Jerome Xavier, who was with Akbar at the time, it is less partisan and therefore deserving of acceptance. Fr. Xavier's version establishes that the fort was taken by wholesale bribery of the leaders of the garrison. The story of a dreadful pestilence having compelled the surrender of the fort was a fabrication on the part of Abul Fazl, invented as an apologia to cover up the corrupt methods adopted by his patron.

According to this version, Bahadur in February 1600 arranged to come out and meet Shaikh Farid. The Imperial general used every argument to cajole Bahadur to submit, but Bahadur was admant and declined, merely shaking his head and ultimately returned to the fort. All expectations of Bahadur's submission having failed, Akbar personally came near the walls of the fort. In March, he himself directed allotment of trenches to his different generals. Heavy fire was then directed against the fort but the garrison would not flinch. In June, the invaders met with slight success. Maligarh was captured but the main fort remained as impregnable as ever.

In August 1600 the news of the fall of Ahmednagar arrived. The news of this disaster must in all probability have caused deep dejection to Bahadur and his officers. But then an unexpected calamity had fallen on the Mughal camp in Burhanpur also. Salim had risen in open revolt. Akbar had to extricate himself at any cost from the entanglement in Asirgarh. Thus both the parties had reasons enough to start negotiations afresh.

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[18] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 1168, 1170, 1176.

The heart-breaking news of the revolt of his eldest son forced Akbar to take the initiative. He sent an invitation to Bahadur to meet him. The invitation was accompanied by a solemn assurance that Bahadur would be allowed to return in safety. Coming as it did from the Emperor himself, Bahadur accepted it without any hesitation despite protests from the Portuguese officers who were manning his artilery.

Bahadur arrived in Burhanpur wearing round his neck a scarf in a fashion understood to be submission to a superior. Akbar, however, received him in full Court sternly, sitting motionless like a statue. Bahadur advanced humbly and did reverence thrice. Suddenly one of the Imperial officers caught him rudely and threw him down on the ground forcing him to do the prostration. This rude act on the part of the Imperial officer was probably prearranged, for Akbar showed no sign of resentment at the impudent behaviour of his subordinate. Akbar then asked Bahadur, though politely, to send a written communication to the garrison to surrender the fort. Bahadur declined and was at once placed under detention.

Hearing the news of this treachery, the Abyssinian commandant sent his son Mukarrib Khan to protest. When Mukarrib came, the Emperor inquired of him if his father would surrender the fort. Mukarrib's answer was a flat refusal couched in a language full of taunts. The very truth of the insulting taunts stung Akbar bitterly. He ordered Mukarrib to be stabbed.

Akbar turned in desperation to Fr. Jerome and Benedict of Goes requesting them to write to the Portuguese authorities at Goa to send him heavy artillery to reduce the fort to submission. When they refused he flew into a terrible rage.

Leaving Asir unsubdued was disastrous to his prestige as an invincible conqueror. But it was imperative that he must return at once to the capital. Every moment of delay at Asirgarh might mean disaster for there was a possibility that Salim might even march on Agra. He realised at the same time that the siege would go on for an indefinite time. But where force failed, artfulness might succeed. A large number of officers of the garrison were bribed with heavy payments in gold and silver. The precious metal had its effect and most of the leaders of the garrison were won over. In vain did the Abyssinian commandant, alien though he was to the soil but more faithful to the salt he had eaten than the Khandesh generals, ask the seven royal princes who were in the fort who amongst them was prepared to succeed Bahadur. None came forward to take the crown. " Would to God, said the enraged Abyssinian in disdain, "you were women!" Feeling that his efforts to save the fort had failed, the old commandant prepared to court death before disaster fell. He bathed, had his shroud brought to him and then taking poison ended his life. On January 17, 1601 the courrupt leaders of the garrison capitulated and surrendered the fort.

The two versions are totally contradictory though both come from sources closest to the Emperor. In the absence of other corroborative evidence, it is difficult to determine which of them presents the truth. Sirhindi testifies that some of the garrison who came out on that fateful day had suffered from weakness of sight and paralysis in their lower extremities. That would suggest that some sort of epidemic had broken out; yet, unlike Abul Fazl, he does not mention that 25,000 men had perished in any pestilence.[19]

Even from the version of Abul Fazl it appears clearly that the fort was captured by unfair means, heavy bribery and corruption. Ferishta observes that as the siege of Asirgarh lasted for a considerable time "the air, on account of a number of troops cooped up in the fort, became unhealthy. This occasioned a pestilence which swept off several of the garrison." But even he concedes that " Miran Bahadur Khan had still sufficient men for the defence of the Ascer as well as a large magazine of warlike stores and provisions."[20] Ferishta however borrowed his facts for this part of his history from *Akbarnama* and it might well be that he took his cue from Abul Fazl. Vincent Smith adopts Du Jarrie's narrative based on the letters of Fr. Jerome as true but Payne, the English editor of Du Jarrie, doubts if Abul Fazl's version of the pestilence in Asirgarh was altogether unfounded. Du Jarrie himself does not mention such a pestilence. It may be that the fact of such a pestilence might not be a total invention but it is certain that the estimate of Abul Fazl that 25,000 men died as a result of it was an exaggeration.[21] There can hardly be any doubt that the ignoble methods by which the strongest fort in India was captured by Akbar must for ever remain as a slur on his reputation.

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[19] Sirhindi, in Ell & Daw, VI, 140.

While at Burhanpur, Akbar had been continually pressing Danial to pursue more vigorously the capture of Ahmednagar sending men and reinforcements. Chandbibi, who had recovered her position, found it impossible to fight alone against the increasing strength of the Imperialists. She again made proposals for peace. But there were men still working against her and her policy. While her proposals were still being mooted, Abhang Khan marched with a large army against her and camped near the walls of Ahmednagar. Finding however that some of the leaders inside the fort were for peace, he disbanded his army in disgust without giving battle.

On April 5, 1600 the Imperialists advanced and encamped near Ahmednagar. Chandbibi again renewed her overtures for peace. But there were men inside the fort, who, in sympathy with Abhang Khan, were incessantly plotting against her. They had at last their chance. Enraged at her attitude of conciliation, a eunuch, Jila Khan and some others treacherously put Chandbibi to death and then commenced an attack on Danial's army with their guns.

The invaders built a glacis, (*Khakroz*), filled up the moat and, coming close to the walls, laid their mines. The garrison, however, found them in time and managed to extinguish them. Time and again, the invaders laid the mines but the garrison either destroyed or extinguished them. At last on August 16, 1600 a tower of the fort, Laila by name, together with thirty yards of the wall were blown up. The imperial forces made an onrush on the broken part of the fort and effected their entry. 1,500 men from the garrison were put to the sword. Bahadur, the minor Nizam-ul-Mulk, was captured and sent to the safe asylum of Gwalior. Vast treasures including a grand library built up by generation after generation, a number of guns and ammunition fell into the hands of the victorious Mughals.[22]

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[20] Ferishta, History of the Mahomedan Power, Tr. Briggs, II, 278.

[21] Cf. Lawrence Binyon, Akbar, 142.

The fall of Ahmednagar was regarded as an event of such sinister import in the Deccan that it not only accelerated the capitulation of Asirgarh but made Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur to hasten to send felicitations to Akbar on his victory. On March 7, 1601, Danial arrived at his father's camp and the Emperor received him with the honours due to a victorious leader. He was rewarded with the governorship of Khandesh and Berar and such parts of Ahmednagar territory as had so far been acquired by the Mughals.

In spite, however, of the fall of Ahmednagar, Deccan was not completely subjugated and there was hardly any peace worth the name. Nasik and Daulatabad were still in the hands of the Deccanis. Their leaders appointed Ali, the son of Shah Ali, the third son of Burhan, as the new Nizam-ul-Mulk at Daulatabad. He and one Raju constantly stirred up resistance against the Mughal authority in the Deccan. Mirza Abdur Rahim therefore had to go to Ahmednagar and Abul Fazl to Nasik. From Burhanpur, which Danial made his headquarters, the Prince kept on moving his generals from place to place to retain the conquered parts under the Imperial domination.

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[22] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 1157-1159.

CHAPTER XV

ADMINISTRATION

I

AKBAR'S greatest ambition in life was to build up a vast and enduring Empire in India. He knew that mere military power would not ensure the permanence of an empire. The experience of the Sultanates of Delhi was not lost on him. His own grandfather was a military genius. Yet the Empire he founded disintegrated under his indolent son.

Akbar realised that a strong political system and an efficient administrative machinery were imperatively necessary for an enduring empire; and he set about in his characteristically forthright manner to achieve them. Herein lies his greatest contribution to Indian constitutional development. His evolution of a Paramount Power based on subsidiary alliances with subordinate rulers and of an administrative system based on a fusion of Hindu and Persian systems furnished the bulwarks on which the Mughal Empire rested not only during his time but also during the reigns of his three successors.

Prior to the advent of the Mughals, there were two contradictory concepts of kingship—the Afghan ideal, in which the King was regarded merely as a *primus inter pares*, having no sacrosanct status[1] and the Turkish ideal under which the King was the divine agent. In an endeavour to reconcile these two ideals, the Sultans of Delhi had built up an administration which had also to take into consideration the problem of safeguarding the frontiers and maintaining internal peace.

The attitude of the Sultans towards their conquered subjects also had to depend on two mutually hostile factors. If they were to adopt a policy of *laissez-faire* in religion, they ran the risk of alienating the faithful among their followers on whose support only their hold on an unwilling and hostile country depended. A policy of persecution, on

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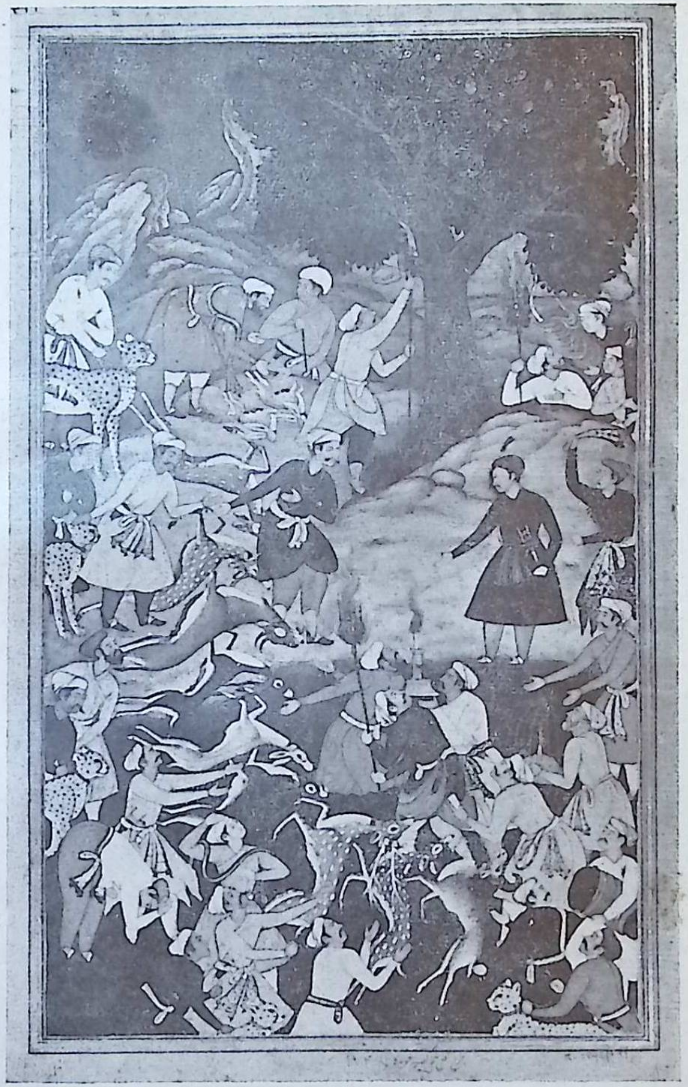
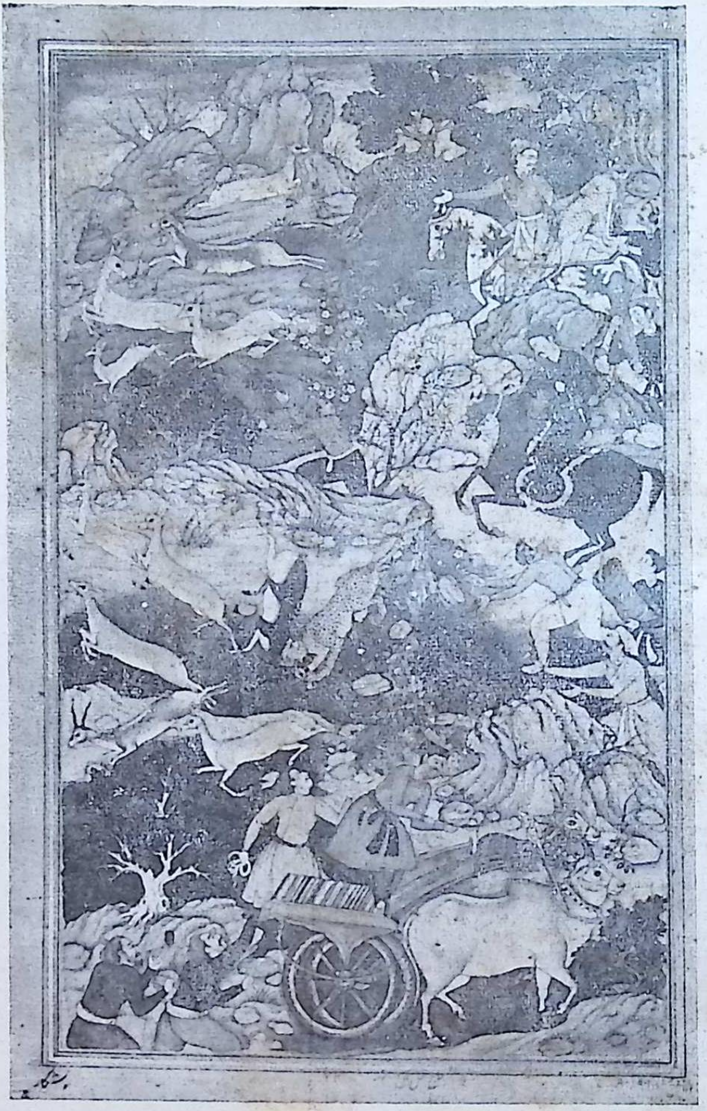
[1] Ibn Hassan, Central Structure of Mughal Empire, 48, 49.



Hunting Scene

Courtesy—**Victoria & Albert Museum, Crown Copyright, London**



Hunting Scene

Courtesy—**Victoria & Albert Museum, Crown Copyright, London** the other hand, was bound to be precarious for the bulk of the population was non-Muslim. They could, of course, do everything by force except to wipe out the entire indigenous population.

In the very nature of things therefore they had to be content with a sort of armed truce with their subjects. Non-Muslim faiths and creeds had to be tolerated as necessary evils. The ruling class had no other thought except that of holding the country under the right of military conquest. So long as that belief held ground, there could be no fusion of interests between the rulers and the ruled. The administration at best was and had to be a huge superimposed military camp, which barred any idea of consolidation. The result was that neither the Government was for the people nor were the people for the Government.

There was, however, a fundamental difference between the mediaeval state in Europe and the one in India. Unlike the European States the Sultanate of Delhi was not feudalistic. It was, on the contrary, a highly centralised bureaucracy with a precise gradation of officers, all of whom were appointed by and subject to summary dismissal at the absolute will of the Sultan. It was thus a territorial state in the modern sense of the term with the Sultan as the apex of the bureaucratic pyramid.

When Babur seized the throne of Delhi, he followed the principle of least resistance. He could have reorganized the administration after his success over Sanga but his was essentially a military genius and he had no eye to a constructive administration. Besides he never treated India as his country. The few years that he had, he wasted in constructing buildings and laying out huge parks on the model of his Kabul. Humayun, too, though on the throne for over a decade, did nothing. He had hardly the vigour or the genius to lay down new principles of administration. His addiction to opium and the disloyalty of his brothers cost him the throne which he could recover only because of the dissensions among the Afghans and the inaptitude of the successors of Shershah govern.

Under the Lodis the country had been divided for administrative purposes into *Sarkars*, the vassal States and the lands conferred on the zamindars. The *Sarkars* which comprised the larger portion of the country were assigned by Babur to his immediate followers after his victories at Panipat and Khanwa. These were granted as fiefs and their holders were expected to maintain a certain number of soldiers out of their revenues. These fief-holders were to collect the revenue and also to carry on the civil administration. Besides these two classes of land, there was a third class of *Saryugal* lands granted by Muslim rulers for religious and charitable purposes. There were granted for life. They were subject to resumption by the ruler and no condition for military service was attached to them. This was approximately the administrative system under the Lodis and Babur and Humayun continued it without appreciable alterations.

Unlike Babur and Humayun, Shershah was an adept administrator having had practical training in the management of his father's jagir for nearly 25 years. He had a keen sense of duty and prodigious energy for organization. For a long period he had watched the administrative machinery under Babur and Humayun and had seen its weaknesses. But brilliant though he was as an administrator he had not the vision of an abiding political system.

The territory under him extended from Sunargaon in the east to the Gakkar country in the west. In the south it touched the Vindhya range. He seems to have retained the existing provinces, *Sarkars* and *parganas* except in the case of Bengal. He divided Bengal into smaller governorships probably to minimize the chances of a rebellion and at the same time to satisfy his numerous chiefs. These chiefs were equal in status and were independent of each other. Yet to prevent fissiparous tendencies among them he had a central officer, called the *Amin*, to whom they were responsible. The *Amin's* position resembled that of the Viceroy under the Mughals under whom several minor provinces were combined. Although therefore Bengal was divided owing to the exigencies of the times, the essential unity of Bengal was preserved. It was still kept as one unit for administrative purposes.[2]

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[2] P. Sarsan, The Provincial Government of the Mughals 49, 57.

In spite, however, of several measures exacted by Shershah to evolve a centralized administration, the Afghan theory that the realm was the tribal property and the king was but one of the chiefs selected by them, persisted.[3] Even Shershah could not transform this theory. By his astuteness and the weight of his personality he reduced his chiefs into submissiveness and for a time made his governors feel that they were responsible to him. During his lifetime, the provinces attained a status which became the substructure for Akbar's administrative edifice.[4] With the death of Shershah, however, the old tendencies reappeared. The governors again became so powerful that his successors had to cajole them for their cooperation.

Whatever reforms Shershah introduced were only administrative measures to bring into control the regions he conquered. But even he could not change the complexion of the State. The State still remained as a vast alien military camp, having no roots in the loyalty of the subjects. The ruling dynasty was emphemeral in character, its strength depending upon the degree of military efficiency that each ruler could for the time being muster.[5] By its very nature the administration was a military and a centralised despotism.

To his Muslim subjects, the sovereign was the head of both the State and religion. Towards his non-Mulsim subjects, the sovereign followed the policy of minimum interference, performing only police duties and the collection of revenues. Education, for instance, was not considered part of the functions of the State. At best it served as a handmaid of religion and if any amount was spent on it, it was by way of royal benefaction. Encouragement of art and literature was similarly a personal matter of the sovereign. All social activities were thus left to the community, the State not accepting any obligations in that regard.[6]

Being an absolute despotism, the administration was naturally coloured by the race and creed of the rulers. Strangers as they were to the country, the Mughals naturally brought with them the only administrative system known to them of the Abbasid Khalifs of Iraq and the Fatimid Khalifs of Egypt. The principles of their government, their religious policy, their rules of taxation, even the titles of their officers were imported from outside and only such modifications were made as were necessitated by local conditions.

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[3] Ibn Hassan, Central Structure of Mughal Empire, 48.
[4] P. Saran, The Provincial Government of the Mughals, 61, 62.
[5] Ibn Hassan, Central Structure of Mughal Empire, 50.
[6] Jadhunath Sarkar, Mughal Administration, 6, 7.

As was the case in the early centuries of Arab rule, the administration had two distinct political functions; the governorship and the treasury. The governor or the *Amir* had the control of the army and the police. With him was the *Amil*, the head of the treasury. These two officers were independent of each other, each watchful of the other. The *Amir*, no doubt, was higher in authority, being the executive head of the province but the *Amil* had greater influence with the sovereign. In the villages the indigenous system existing from the ancient times was allowed to continue.

The administration being of a military character, every official of the State had to be enrolled in the army. The ruler bestowed on him a *mansab* which meant that he had to maintain a precise number of horsemen under him from the remuneration paid to him. The *mansab* determined his status. Civil servants, officers at ports, customs, accountants in the higher grade and even painters and poets at the Court were all called *mansabdars*. Their salaries had first to be passed by the *Bakshis*, the military paymasters and then only could they be paid by the *Diwan*.

The administrative system had all the inherent weaknesses of a highly centralised system. Due to the vastness of territory and the slow and often difficult means of communications, it was inevitable that there should be multiplication of official correspondence and the growth of a great mass of central as well as local records. The central Government had, for their own information, to maintain a host of spies, news-letter writers and couriers. Except in the case of military campaigns organised by the ruler himself, the Mughal administration was a "Kaghazi Raj," a paper Government, unwieldy and handicapped with red-tapism.[7]

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[7] Ibid, 15.

The State having no social or economic activities to perform, that burden fell on the headman or the Council of elders of the village. The village community enjoyed full freedom to lead its own life. The Central or the Provincial Government hardly ever interfered with it except in the case of some serious upheaval or insurrection. In the absence, however, of any specific revenues allotted to it and the territorial division of the village being too small, it could hardly do anything substantial towards social or economic development or the amelioration of the people.

II

With all these weaknesses, Akbar gave the country one official language, a uniform administrative system, coinage and a common system of weights and measures. The system of weights and measures prevailing till then lacked any uniformity leading to considerable confusion and retarded free inter-provincial trade. Akbar discarded different weights and measures prevalent in different regions and prescribed common units of weight, length and surface measures. It is true that in spite of his regulations, the old systems persisted at various places. The new units were employed only in the capital and the neighbouring areas. They had not become established in the seaports even upto the time of his death. Nonetheless a good beginning of the modern uniform system of scales and weights was made.[8] Even outside the territories directly administered by the government, the administrative methods of Agra, the Court etiquette, and the monetary system were imitated by the neighbouring Rajas. Persian was made the official language for all records. All *Sanads*, *Farmans*, *parvanas* and other records were prepared in that language which had to be studied even by the Hindu officers who mostly monopolised the lower services.

Officers were often transferred from one place to another as the exigencies necessitated. But these transfers did not upset the working of the administration owing to the uniformity of system and procedure. Barriers such as imposts, tolls and customs between one *Suba* and the other no longer existed, thus facilitating inter-provincial trade and intercourse. Caravans carrying commercial goods could easily pass from one corner of the Empire to the other, fostering such centres of trade as Agra, Fathpur, Delhi, Lahore, Patna, Jaunpur, Ahmedabad, Cambay, Broach and Surat.

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[8] W. H. Moreland, India at the Death of Akbar, 52, 60.

This led to a growing sense of oneness of territory and a common fountain of all authority. Yet the consciousness of one nationality could not develop. The reason was that the people enjoyed no civil liberties and no share in the administration. They were still treated as subjects of the Empire and not as citizens though under Akbar they enjoyed a sense of equality in a certain measure. But there was neither liberty nor fraternity, the two vital features of nationalism.

Throughout his reign, Akbar made incessant changes in the administrative structure with the purpose of bringing the Empire under a cohesive system. Yet he refrained from wiping out the existing states in the process of reorganisation except where necessity made it inevitable. He allowed the heads of such states the virtual enjoyment of internal autonomy. A considerable part of his dominions remained thus under the rule of the existing hereditary chiefs and was never directly administered by the Imperial Government.

Such States varied widely in their status and relations with the Imperial Government. There were some who merely paid nominal allegiance. There were others, who were directly controlled by the centre which even intervened in their internal affairs. In almost all cases, however, there was the uniform obligation on the chief to a regular attendance at the Imperial Court. There was also the control of the Emperor, with few exceptions, over the right of succession which made possible for him to assert his authority over the states.

Relations with these states could not in the nature of things be uniform. They depended on the terms of treaties under which their submission was secured. The states situate in Siwalik hills, though small in extent, for instance, enjoyed a larger degree of independence than those in Rajputana. Nagarkot was one of them. These States paid no tribute nor were they liable for military levies or personal service. Their rulers held no *mansabs.* The Emperor claimed no right of control over their succession. All the same even these states had to formally surrender their territory to the Emperor which was returned to the ruler almost simulatenously, though as a fief.

Though the states in Rajputana came under greater restrictions, there was by ho means uniformity in the relations with them. Bikaner, Jodhpur and Sirohi are all mentioned in the *Ain* as *Sarkars* under Ajmer Province but in point of fact the first two dealt directly with the Emperor while Sirohi was mainly under the control of the governor of Gujarat. Orcha, though subdued from time to time, remained throughout a problem state which could not be brought under complete control. As late as 1602 A.D. its ruler Birsingh Deo, guilty of the murder of Abul Fazl and denounced as a rebel to be captured dead or alive, could not be apprehended.

The defeat of the Rajput confederacy under Sanga by Babur was no doubt a crucial event turning the balance of power in favour of the invaders. In spite of that reversal, the Rajput chiefs still retained their kingdoms as before, safe and even defiant in their several hilly fortresses. Akbar understood the politics of Rajputana. With a liberal outlook he won over a majority of them in his endeavour to build up an Empire and persuaded them to acknowledge his paramountcy. He therefore hardly ever interfered with or restricted their internal sovereignty.

In theory, the province of Ajmer included various tributary kingdoms of Rajputana. In practice only Nagore and Ajmer were centrally administered. The crown did not collect revenue in these states except in Nagore and Ajmer. In Bikaner and Jodhpur there were no *Saryugal* lands at all. Even in Chitor, Ranthambhor and Nagore there were *Saryugal* lands only in a few *Mahals.* *Saryugal* lands in fact existed only in four out of twenty six *Mahals* in Chitor, five out of seventy five Mahals in Ranthambhor and nine out of thirty-one *Mahals* in Nagore.[9]

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[9] Dr. P. Saran, Provincial Government of the Mughals, 125.

These states had certain common features in their relations with Delhi. They enjoyed internal autonomy. But they all had the obligation to supply military levies to the Imperial army, payment of annual tribute and attendance at the Court by the ruler or a representative from his family. The Emperor had, in theory, the right to control succession though that right was scarcely exercised. They were not allowed to mint a separate coinage, the reason being that the Muslim conquerors always insisted on the minting of coins and the reading of the *Khutbah* in the name of the ruler. Nevertheless even the states in Rajputana had the right to levy customs and transit duties on merchants passing through their territories.

In Orissa, on the other hand, Akbar was content in 1565 with the formal acknowledgment of his paramountcy by the Hindu ruler through his envoy Rai Parmanand and the presents offered through him.[10] Later on even when Mansingh drove out the Afghans from that territory, a total annexation was not considered politic and Mansingh was allowed to inaugurate a new dynasty of rulers under Ramchand of Kharda.[11]

When Gujarat was conquered, conditions there were considered favourable for a total merger. The kingdom was divided into sixteen *Sarkars*. Ten of them were brought under the direct administration of the Crown while the remaining six, Sirohi, Banswara, Dungarpur, Nawanagar, Ramnagar and Idar were treated as tributary states under the control of the governor of Gujarat. Though Akbar thus tried to base his relations with the conquered states on the basis of paramountcy, these relations were by no means of a standard pattern.

Realising that it was impossible to consolidate his dynasty in India without the co-operation of his non-Muslim subjects, Akbar relieved the administration from the thraldom of the Muslim minority who had so far enjoyed the monopoly of higher posts just as he had relieved the country from the thraldom of a minority religion. " A sign of the sagacity of this King is this," observes Abul Fazl, "that he employed in his service people of all classes, Jews, Persians, Turanis etc. because one class of people, if employed to the exclusion of others would cause rebellions as in the case of Uzbegs and Qizilb'ashes (Persians) who used to dethrone their Kings."[12]

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[10] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, II, 382.
[11] Dr. P. Saran, Provincial Government of the Mughals, 153.

The list of grandees given by Abul Fazl shows that there were very few Indian Muslims in the higher ranks, either in the army or in the civil service. A majority of them were Persians, Afghans and. Hindus.[13] There were in all twenty Hindu chiefs either as Ministers or Counsellors engaged in the work of administration and in the control of the royal household. They were nearly always with him. Some of them were admitted even to the inner parts of the Royal Palace, a privilege not shared even by the Mughal nobles.[14] His method of taking an important decision was to consult each of his nobles and then accept the opinion of the majority or of the most experienced. The ultimate decision, however, was always his. He even used to ask their opinions even after he had made up his mind.[15]

Amongst the most important posts, Todermal held the post of the finance and revenue Minister and for some time even that of the Prime Minister. Raja Mansingh, Bhagwandas and Rai Singh were at different times the governors of different provinces. It redounds to the credit of Akbar that he had no hesitation in appointing Bhagwandas and Mansingh as governors of the Punjab and Afghanistan, the two most crucial frontier provinces. Throughout his life, Birbal too held as eminent a position in the inner circles of the Court as Abul Fazl did.

Out of 137 *Mansabdars* of 1,000 and above set out in the *Ain* 14 were Hindus. Out of 415 *Mansabdars* of 200 and above 51 were Hindus. Seventy percent *Mansabdars*, however, were foreigners belonging to families which had come to India with Humayun or had arrived at the Court soon after Akbar's accession. The remaining thirty per cent of the appointments were held by Indians. At the end of his reign there were 21 Hindus who held *Mansabs* above 500. Of these 17 were Rajputs and the remaining four were Birbal and his son, Todermal and a Khattri whose origin is not recorded.[16] In later years Mansingh held the *Mansab* of 7,000, a rare honour, normally reserved for the members of the Royal family. In 1594-1595 out of the twelve provincial Finance Ministers, as many as eight were Hindus.

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[12] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Blochmann, I, 211.

[13] Ibid, 528, 534, 537.

[14] Banerjee & Hayland, Commentary of Fr. Monserrate, 203, 204.

[15] Ibid, 207, 208, 209.

III

Though preoccupied with numerous military expeditions, Akbar was incessantly making experiments after experiments, introducing novel principles in the field of administration. Though fortunate in having able officers, the credit for the several innovations in this field must go to him. A brilliant soldier and an outstanding general, he was also endowed with a mind capable not only of grasping broad principles of government but of attending to the minutest details.

No theoretical science of public finance or economics had yet come into existence, yet questions relating to public finance and the incidence of taxation were fairly understood by his ministers. The vast territories held by Akbar had a complicated system of taxation, modified and developed from time to time by a series of able *vazirs* amongst whom the name of Todermal will ever be remembered. They were far too conscious of the fundamental principle of governance that the administration must ensure the maximum good of the people. They were also aware that taxation must be such as would strike a balance between the interests of the subjects and the needs of the government.

From the very start, Akbar abandoned the Islamic theory of taxation and adopted the one prevalent in India that taxation was essentially a consideration paid to the king for the protection given to the subjects and the administration he had to maintain for that purpose.[17] It was in consideration of this principle that Akbar abolished such imposts as the *jiziah* and the pilgrims' taxes, vestiges of the Turkish rule.

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[16] W. H. Moreland, India at the death of Akbar, 69, 70, 73.

[17] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Jarett, II 55.

Another principle well recognised was that the ownership of land remained vested in the peasant. There was, therefore, no such thing as the superior title of the state to the land as in the British concept. The Crown claimed only a share in the produce of the land in exchange for the protection it gave to the subject. Consequently even grants such as the jagirs and *Saryugals* meant only the grant of a portion of the land's produce which the state imposed on the farmer and not that of the ownership of the land. In point of fact, fiefs were not granted even for life; they were not heritable and were only in lieu of salaries. The jagir-holders were moreover always subject to transfers at the absolute discretion of the Crown. There was no zamindari in the modern sense of the term for the land remained the property of the farmer. After conquest it was neither resumed nor redistributed by the ruler.[18]

In the beginning of the reign, the underlying principle of revenue assessment was to collect the figures of current prices, to take the gross produce of the land, estimate its value and then to determine the rates of collection. The incidence of revenue fixed at 33% under Shershah was retained. Payment of revenue was generally in cash but it was not rigidly insisted on. The form of payment was " sufficiently elastic to suit the convenience of the State and the farmer."[19]

In 1566 when Muzafar Khan was the *Vazir* he introduced a change in the prevailing system of assessment. The new system set aside the existing one of an approximate yield and substituted it by an actual one. Under the new method ten *qanungoes* and a host of other officials were appointed to assess the revenue on the basis of actual produce. Under the old system the assessment was largely a paper assessment entailing injustice to the peasants. Often the officials who fixed the approximate and anticipated yield could be bribed to bring down the figures.[20]

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[18] Dr. P. Saran, Provincial Government of the Mughals, 330-333.

[19] Ibid, 297, 300.

Even this method did not work satisfactorily either for the farmer or for the state. In 1575-1576 a year known for a series of radical reforms, Akbar, in total disregard of the traditional division called *parganas*, divided the Imperial territories into 182 purely artificial areas. Bengal, Bihar and Gujarat were, however, not included in this division. Each area was divided on an anticipated yield of a crore of *tankas* or revenue equal to about Rs. 2,50,000. The officers appointed to collect the revenue were called *Karoris*. On the introduction of this system, measurements of land were commenced from Fathpur. This system, however, lasted for five years only as the change proved unpopular and resulted in great hardships to the peasants. " A great portion of the country " protested Badaoni, " was laid waste through the rapacity of the *Karoris*."[21] Each revenue officer had to make up a crore of *tankas* irrespective of the actual yield of the lands under him.

The most important reform effected during this year was the division of the entire territory of the Empire into twelve *Subas* or provinces, Agra, Ajmer, Allahabad, Oudh, Bengal, Bihar, Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Malwa, Multan and Gujarat. Each *Suba* was subdivided into *Sarkars* and each *Sarkar* into *parganas* or *mahals*. In each province the Emperor appointed a governor (*Sipah-Salar*), a *diwan*, a *bakshi*, a *miradal*, a *Sadr*, *Kotwal*, *Mir-bahr* (admiral) and a recorder or news-writer.[22] After Khandesh, Berar and Ahmednagar were conquered, the number of provinces rose to fifteen.

A record office was set up at the capital to preserve all the administrative orders despatched from the *Vazir's* office to the various provincial centres.[23]. Equally important were the measures regarding the conversion of jagirs into *Khalsa* (Crown) lands, the precise grading of *mansabs* and the law known as the Law of Branding.[24]

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20. A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, II, 402, 403.
21. Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 189.
22. A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 413.
23. Ibid, 167.
24. Ibid, 461, 462, 480.

After the conquest of Gujarat in 1573, Todermal was sent there for effecting land settlement. This assignment gave him an opportunity to prove his special talents. He made a rapid but systematic measurement as a preliminary to the assessment of land revenue and surveyed 64 out of the 184 *Sarkars* and made his report to Akbar in 1575.[25] All the essential features of Todermal's subsequent settlement of northern India were anticipated in this settlement of Gujarat.

Both the systems, that of Muzafar Khan and the *Karori* system having failed, Shah Mansur, then *Vazir* and reckoned as one of the most competent in accountancy, promulgated an order in 1580, which brought about yet another change in the method of assessment. Instead of fixing the assessment annually it was to be fixed for a period of ten years. An average yield was to be arrived at from the 15th to the 24th regnal years and after ascertaining the average, 1/10th of it was fixed as the assessable.[26] Crops were divided into good, middle and bad. The share of the state was arrived at by ascertaining one-third of the total value of the average yield. This share was then converted into cash on the basis of the current market rates. The merit of this change was that it minimised the seasonal fluctuations in the Imperial revenues. It also marked a definite step towards the transformation of the peasant into a cash-paying tenant.[27]

Soon after his appointment as the Revenue Minister, Todermal issued in 1582 a Code of Rules (*Dastur-al-amal*) for the revenue officers. These rules were intended to check the prevailing corruption amongst the revenue staff. Among other things they provided that the Collectors of Crown lands and the lands of fief-holders were to collect the revenue strictly in accordance with the new Code. If they took anything more from the peasant, the excess was to be credited to the farmer and the officer concerned was to be fined. Such fines were to be entered in the monthly accounts. The officers were to make inquiries during every harvest of the land actually tilled by the farmers. It appeared that in the Crown lands, cultivated land was diminishing year by year. The farmer often managed by bribing the revenue officer to see that his land was not entered as cultivated land in the revenue register and thus escaped assessment for years. To stop this corruption these lands were ordered to be surveyed once for all.

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[25] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, II, 402, 403.
[26] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 413-414.
[27] W. H. Moreland, India at the Death of Akbar, 99, 100, 111, 112.

In order to avoid hardship to the farmer, these rules provided that consideration was to be shown to the farmers in the execution of the orders of assessment. Thus lands which remained fallow for four years were to be charged one half of the dues in the first year, three-fourths in the second year and full only in the third year. Destitute farmers were to be given advances on the security of reputed persons. These advances were to be recovered after the spring and the autumn harvests. The provincial authorities were ordered to make reports to the Central Government at stated intervals about the collections to enable the Emperor to award rewards and punishments to the officers in suitable cases.

The rules also provided that the Collector was to have his headquarters at a place easily accessible to the farmers. He was to appoint measuring parties who would survey the extent, kind and quality of cultivation. In case of excessive rains an amount of 2½ *biswas* were to be left out of account while as much as 3 *biswas* was to be left out of account in jungle and sandy places.

Abstracts of accounts were to be sent weekly. A journal of collections was also to be sent monthly to the central office. A list of damaged lands was also to be prepared and sent so that the Revenue Minister could pass suitable orders for exemption or reduction of taxes.

Officers such as the *Suba*, the *Faujdar*, the fief-holder and the Collector were urged to work in co-operation and in unison against turbulent elements. The guilty were to be admonished in the first instance but if persuasion failed then they were to devastate the crops and even the habitations of such rowdy elements. In the event of the armed forces having to be called out to restore order, a collective or punitive fine was to be imposed on the entire locality.

The Code provided that the *ryots* should pay the taxes regularly. In the case of a defaulter, a watchman was to be posted over the harvested grain and rent was to be realised from such grain.

An account of the rent to be collected from each person was ordered to be maintained. It was also ordered that the date of payment should in no case be either anticipated or postponed. The Collector was to send to the treasury the cash collected under the signature of the *patwari*. Officers and jagirdars were also to send regular reports about the people living in their localities.

Regulations were also made for the measuring parties. A measuring party was to consist of an *amin*, a writer and three servants. Their allowances were fixed on a contract basis.[28] These contracts provided that the surveyors were to be paid 58 *dams* for measuring 200 *bighas* in Rabi and 250 *bighas* in Kharif systems. This system however was found to be unsatisfactory and was soon replaced by payment of wages at the rate of one *dam* per *bigha*.

Akbar next reformed the scales and instruments of measurements by establishing a uniform *gaz* of 41 digits and substituting in place of the hempen rope a bamboo joined by iron rings.[29]

Several irregular imposts which had locally grown up and which crushed the ryots, were abolished. These had been collected and appropriated by the revenue officers without any sanction from the Government. These consisted of duties on local sales of produce, fees on the sales of immovable properties, licenses for plying certain trades, forced subscriptions and special imposts such as on those Hindus who bathed in the Ganges and other holy rivers.[30]

These reforms entailed considerable work. By 1583 the office of the *Diwan* became so burdened with work that it had to be decentralised. The house-hold department was entrusted to Murad, Faith and Religion to Prince Danial, charities to Sultan Khwaja appointments and dismissals of officers in Khalsa lands to Todermal, arms and wages to Shahbaz Khan, rates and prices of goods to Zain Khan Koka, roads to Qulij Khan, properties of the deceased subjects and their devolution to the rightful heirs to Sharifkhan, State buildings to Nawrang Khan, purchase and sale of State jewels and minerals to Itimad Khan and administration of justice to Birbal and Abul Fazl.[31]

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[28] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 561-565.
[29] P. Saran, Prov. Govt. of Mughals, 319-321.
[30] Sarkar, Mughal Administration, 121, 127.

After the death of Todermal, Qulij Khan was appointed the *Vazir* and Finance Minister. He found the work of the revenue department so heavy that the Crown lands were divided into four main divisions. Punjab, Multan, Kabul and Kashmir were entrusted to Khwaja Shamsuddin; Ajmer, Gujarat and Malwa to Nizamuddin Ahmed; Delhi to Rai Patr Das and Agra, Allahabad, Bihar and Bengal to Rai Ram Das.[32] All these four officers were of course responsible to the Finance Minister.

In 1595 the total population of India was approximately one hundred million. Of these, 40 million resided in Northern India excluding Bengal and Gujarat and 30 million in Southern India. The population consisted, besides the Hindus and the Muslims, of a few Jews and Armenians, Parsis, Portuguese and Abyssinian slaves. There was however, no well-defined middle class in the modern sense of the term.[33]

As seen from the *Ain*, the established liberal professions were medicine, learning, literature and art which included caligraphy, music and painting. The educated middle class being very small, the road to success for those who followed these professions was patronage from the Court, both central and provincial. The one exception was the celebrated Tulsidas (1533-1624) who composed at this time his famous *Ramacharitamanas* which attained unbounded popularity throughout the length and breadth of the country, an eloquent testimony to the fact that fine literature needs no patronage. Though living at Benares, not far from the Court, Tulsidas was not discovered by Akbar or his courtiers.

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[31] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 598, 599.
[32] Ibid, 924.
[33] W. H. Moreland, India at the Death of Akbar, 22, 23, 27.

IV

In the year 1594-1595 the Empire consisted of 105 *Sarkars* divided into 2737 townships. Based on the system of ten years' assessment, the total revenue amounted to Rs. 9,07,43,881.[34] These figures of course changed from time to time as further conquests necessitated reorganisation.

Just as the governor was the executive head of the Province, his counterpart in the *Sarkar* was the *faujdar*. His functions were to guard the countryside, maintain the militia and to assist the *amulguzar*, the revenue officer, to realise the revenue. A net-work of outposts, each under a *sub-faujdar* covering the *parganas* in his charge helped him to maintain law and order in the locality under him. Besides the *faujdar* and the *amulguzar* there were the *Kazi* and the *Kotwal*. The *Kazi* and the *Kotwal* managed between them the judicial work.

In the *pargana* the executive officer was the *shiqdar* who along with the *pargana Kazi* looked after the judicial work. The *Amil* and the *quanungo* dealt with the revenue work.[35]

The *amulguzar* of the *Sarkar* was assisted by the *bitikchi* and other staff. In the *pargana*, the *amil* had the assistance of the *shiqdar*, the *quanungo*, the *patwari* and the headman of the village. The *shiqdar* had to receive the revenue collected by the *amil* and control the treasury staff, to represent the *faujdar* in the *pargana*, to collect reports of the cultivated lands, to assess the crops, to send every month to the Court reports of daily receipts and expenditure and to remit the monies as soon as two lacs of *dams* were collected. He had also to keep a check on the *patwari* and the other local staff and to examine and administer the *Suryugals*. He was directly under the control of the governor who could recommend his dismissal to the Court if found corrupt or inefficient.

The *bitikchi* was an equally important official. Next to the *amulguzar* it was his function to prepare the necessary records on the basis of which the assessment was carried out.

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[34] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Jarett, II, 114-115.
[35] P. Saran, Prov. Govt. of the Mughals, 207, 217.

He was to take the yearly average of revenue of each village on the basis of the average of the past ten years worked out by the *quanungo*, define the boundaries of each village, work out the estimated arable and waste lands, the kind of produce cultivated by each peasant and then finally arrive at the assessment due from each farmer and the village.[36]

Besides these administrative divisions there were the maritime ports to be managed after Sind, Gujarat, Saurashtra and Khandesh were conquered. These ports acquired considerable importance owing to the large sea-borne trade which was then carried on through them. They were treated as separate units and were under the charge of a Superintendent. The port of Surat, however, was a *Sarkar* by itself with 73 *Mahals* under it and its Superintendent had the status of a governor, who was directly under the control of the Central government.

Notwithstanding the fact that the upper strata of the administration was on the Turko-Persian model, the local administration remained on the whole Hindu in character. The old system with all its procedure and traditions still survived. Both in the *parganas* and the *Sarkars*, the revenue and the accounts staff was mostly Hindu.

The peasants were generally antipathic to the tax-collector mainly because they derived no benefit from the State. Even the functions of the Police had to be performed by the villages themselves except when there was some large-scale upheaval or insurrection. They also felt that the old system of assessment, the *Batai*-system, was advantageous to them inasmuch as they could pay a part of the actual rather than an anticipated harvest. In spite of elaborate regulations, there were numerous deficiencies in the collections. The tendency of the peasant was to put off payment. The lethargy of the petty revenue officers in the collection of revenue caused large arrears of revenue. This was the main trouble in the administration. The local revenue officers were on the whole greedy and corrupt and were not slow in exacting all sorts of unauthorised imposts from the farmer. Their corruption found its roots in the pernicious custom, which prevailed throughout the Mughal period, of offering costly presents to the ruler and the princes by the higher officers, who in their turn took presents from their subordinate staff. Similarly presents were given to the Imperial Diwan whenever the governors of the provinces visited the Court.[37] Though bribery was stigmatised as wicked and a net-work of rules was made to put it down, it still flourished on a large scale.

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[36] Ibid, 287, 292.

V

Though in matters of land revenue the ancient Hindu system was largely retained, in the case of other taxes the Quranic law and the practices of the Muslim States outside India were adopted. The structure of taxation; as developed during this period, was therefore the result of two forces, the Hindu practice and the Arabic theory.[38]

The main sources of central revenue were (1) heavy tributes from the Provinces (2) trade which was considerable both by way of exports and imports, (3) hoarded fortunes of the nobles which as the law then prevailed, were escheated to the Crown on their deaths, (4) spoils from the newly conquered regions, (5) personal trading by the Ruler himself, (6) banking done by the Government, (7) tributes from the vassal states (8) Customs including port dues and inland transit duties, (9) salt tax and (10) income from mints and other miscellaneous charges such as imposts on fishing and other trades.

As early as 1578 Akbar had overhauled the mint administration which was formerly in the hands of *chowdharies*, by centralising its management. After consulting his officers such as Shah Mansur, Todermal and Muzaffar Khan, he had set up mints at various centres entrusting each to a trusted officer.[39]

Compared to the rates of custom duties in modern times, the rates fixed by Akbar were low being only 2½ to 3 per cent *ad valorem*. It was only during the time of Aurangzeb that they were increased to 4 per cent in the case of Christians and

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[37] Sarkar, Mughal Administration, 102.
[38] Ibid, 11, 12.
[39] P. Saran, Prov. Govt. of the Mughals, 322, 325.

5 per cent in the case of Hindus. The attitude of the Central administration was on the whole favourable towards foreign commerce. Custom duties were therefore deliberately kept low. According to Finch, custom duties at the port of Surat were 2½% on goods, 3% on provisions and 2% on currency.

But the position of merchants was much less favourable in regard to inland transit. Akbar remitted transit dues on at least two occasions but his progressive intentions were defeated by the governors, who, owing to the impossibility of effective supervision over them, enjoyed full independence. In spite of orders abolishing transit dues they were in fact charged at the close of Akbar's rule, for one of Jahangir's first orders was to forbid the levy of road and river tolls. Besides these dues, there were the escort charges levied by the local chiefs and zamindars, which insured safety from loot and robbery. The burden of inland trade was thus substantial, quite apart from the cost of carriage.[40]

An inland customs duty was levied at Attock in the North-west. There was also salt tax charged at Attock at the rate of Re. 1 on every seventeen maunds. Tolls were however abolished by Akbar though they were subsequently revived by his successors.[41]

An attempt was made to maintain a clear demarcation between the central and the provincial sources of revenue. But since all the higher services were paid through the *Mansabdari* system, the salaries of the subordinate staff only had to be disbursed by the provincial governments. Major sources of revenue had to be appropriated by the central exchequer as the maintenance and establishment costs fell on the central government. The provincial sources of revenue consisted, merely of duties on internal transit, duties on markets such as cloth, jewellery, *pan* etc. and the income from public works and octroi duties.

VI

At the Centre the principal heads of departments were the Imperial *Diwan* who looked after the Exchequer and revenue, the *Khan-i-Saman*, who was responsible for the Imperial household, the Imperial *Bakshi*, who looked after the military pay and accounts, the Chief *Kazi*, who administered the canon law and the civil and criminal laws, the Chief *Sadr* who looked after charities and religious endowments, the *Muhtasib*, who was entrusted with the censorship of public morals, the *Mir-Atish* who managed the manufacture and maintenance of artillery and finally the *Daroghā* of *Dak Chawki*, in charge of posts and intelligence. There were, besides, various work-shops and factories situate in the Palace grounds, each working under a Superintendent responsible to the *Khan-i-Saman*[42]

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[40] W. H. Moreland, India at the Death of Akbar, 46, 48, 49, 50.

[41] P. Saran, Prov. Govt. of the Mughals, 325.

The Imperial *Vazir* was an honorific title without implying charge of any particular branch of administration. He headed the revenue department but that was in his capacity as the *Diwan*.

The office of the *Vazir* received all the revenue records, and the returns and despatches from all the provinces. All orders of disbursements and payments went under his signature. All questions as to collection of revenue were decided by his department.

In all State transactions it was the *Vazir* who acted as the representative of the Emperor. It was he who wrote all the letters on behalf of, though under the directions of, the Emperor. He had two assistants, *Diwan-i-tan*, or minister of salaries and *Diwan-i-Khalsa*, or minister of Crown lands.

Since there was only one type of service and no differentiation of functions, all State servants had to be on the roll of the army. Any government servant could be assigned either civil or military work. Todermal, for instance, was sometimes entrusted with the work of land revenue settlement as in Gujarat, Malwa and Bengal and also with military missions. Every government servant was obliged to maintain a definite force of horsemen corresponding to his rank or *mansab*. Every officer was a commander of a definite number of horsemen but this title was only a convenient means to fix his rank and calculate his remuneration. Officers doing purely civil work and even poets and painters at the Court were enrolled as military officers. Their salaries were calculated and passed by paymasters of the army. Their head was the Imperial *Bakshi* with several assistants under him.

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[42] Sarkar, Mughal Administration, 30, 31.

From the early years of his reign, Akbar appointed news-writers at all provincial capitals. Their duty was to make confidential reports to the Court of the events happening in their terrirories. They were independent of the governors and could, therefore, exercise a restraining effect on them.[43]

In 1575 Akbar established seven watches at the Court. The servants of the Crown were divided into seven divisions, each division being manned by a grandee. A Courtier was selected as *Mir-Arzi* the master of petitions, to facilitate the receiving of petitions and complaints from the subjects.[44] Until 1581 one of the provincial officers at the Court performed the function of *Mir-Arzi*, but during that year owing to the increase in the number of such direct petitions, no less a person than Mirza Abdur Rahim was appointed as *Mir-Arzi*. In 1595 an order was made directing that all confirmatory *sanads* and confidential orders should have the Imperial seal. To avoid fraudulent use of the seal the order also provided that it should remain in the custody of Khan Azam.[45]

The administrative organisation in the provinces corresponded more or less with the one at the centre. The principal officers in the provinces were the governor, the *diwan*, the *bakshi*, the *kazi*, the *sadr* and the censor.

The administration, however, was concentrated in the provincial capitals. Consequently it was mostly urban and concerned itself with the residents of the cities and their immediate neighbourhood. The people in the villages were hardly ever interfered with. Contracts with the villages were maintained through the *faujdars* and the revenue officers in the *Sarkars*. Occasional tours by the Governors were the only means which kept the provincial heads in touch with the village people.[46]

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[43] Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Tr. Rogers & Beveridge, I, 247.
[44] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 207, 208.
[45] Ibid, 1033.
[46] Sarkar, Mughal Administration, 78, 80.

The duties of the governor were to maintain law and order to help the smooth collection of revenue to execute the Imperial decrees sent to him, to report to the Court about the *Mansabdars* in his territory and to maintain a watch over the local zamindars. He was required to send to the Court two despatches at least every month reporting the events happening in the province. He had also to collect tributes from the vassal states and remit them to the Imperial treasury. He was the representative of the Emperor and as such was responsible for defence, administration of criminal justice and general superintendence over the administration of the province.

Next to him, though not subordinate to him, was the provincial *diwan*. He was responsible for the entire revenue administration and civil justice. He also supervised over the work of the *Sadr*.

Under these two heads were the other officers, the *bakshi* the *Sadr*, the *kazi*, the *kotwal*, the *mir bahr*, in charge of ports and customs and the *waqia-Navis*, the news-recorder of the Court.

When a royal prince was appointed as governor, an experienced nobleman used to be appointed as his *ataliq* to guide him.[47] When Danial was made the governor of Allahabad, Qulij Khan was his cousellor. Likewise Abul Fazl was sent to the Deccan when that same prince was transferred there as the Viceroy. In 1598 Sadiq Khan was the Counsellor of Murad in Gujarat.

Though all appointments emanated from the Emperor a distinction was maintained in the *farmans* appointing them. To maintain the representative character of the governor, his appointment came from the Emperor himself under the *farman* styled as *Farman-i-Sabati*. The *diwan*, though selected by the Emperor, was appointed by the *farman* called *Hasb-ul-Hukum* which bore the seal of the *Vazir*. All other officers in the provinces were appointed through the recommendation of the corresponding heads at the centre. The provincial *sadr* was appointed by Imperial *Sanad* on the nomination by the Chief *Sadr*, the provincial *kazi* and the *kazis* in the towns and *parganas* under the nominations of the Chief *Sadr* and the provincial *bakshi* through and under the seal of the Imperial *Bakshi*. There were, of course, no regulations as to the qualifications for these posts, each appointment depending on the absolute will of the Emperor. The orders of appointments and transfers were conveyed by a *Sazawal*, whose duty it was to communicate such orders to the governors. Whenever a new governor was appointed, it was the *Sazawal* who escorted him to his charge.

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[47] P. Saran, Prov. Govt. of the Mughals, 172.

The position of the provincial *diwan* was somewhat peculiar and it was characteristic of the administration then prevailing. Though second in rank, he was virtually the rival of the governor. The two used to keep a vigilant eye on each other. The Provincial *diwan* was the nominee of the Imperial *diwan*; he acted under the latter's orders and was in constant correspondence with him, reporting to him all the acts and omissions of the governor. He was deliberately kept on a par with the governor in all financial matters. Long distances between the Imperial and provincial capitals and the impossibility of maintaining rapid contacts between the two were the reasons for keeping these two heads in constant rivalry. The governor being the head of the executive was, however, regarded as higher in status than the *diwan* and as such enjoyed greater prestige in the public eye.

The provincial *bakshi* looked after the military administration, which included recruitment, mustering and passing of pay-bills of the *mansabdars* and the soldiers and the enforcement of military regulations such as the Laws of Branding. *Bakshi* had his agents under him who reported to him all the events happening in the province.

Besides the official news-writers, there was a secret-service in the Provinces. Its officer called *Harkar* kept the Governor informed of all the events and forwarded to the Court a despatch enclosed in a mail-bag.[48] Men in this secret service were greatly feared by the governor lest they should convey in their secret messages anything damaging to or derogatory of his acts and policies.

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[48] Ibid, 199-201.

In theory the provincial government was under the control of the centre. But in practice long distances and slow and difficult communications made constant supervision impossible. These difficulties were attempted to be overcome by the setting up of the dyarchical system, by the appointment of two more or less independent officers, the Governor and the *Diwan* and the checks and counter-checks each exercised over the other. The intelligence department under the *bakshi* always kept the higher officers in constant dread lest their misdeeds were reported at the Centre. Finally there was the convention that no governor was kept at the same place for more than three years.

Besides these restraining influences, there was the system of accepting petitions and complaints from the subjects directly by the Emperor. Frequent tours by the Emperor himself and intermittent delegations of the grandees to inspect the provincial administrations kept the governors under the constant threat of an imperial censure and even disgrace. During the reign of Akbar there were several instances when the governors were rebuked for their misconduct or transferred or recalled.

The position of the jagirdars was somewhat peculiar in the administrative structure. In devising their powers, Akbar was careful to see that they did not come in the way of the general administration or did not become so powerful as to form a rival or a parallel government.

The jagirdar, therefore, was given the authority only to assess and collect the revenue through his agents but only that amount as was estimated, according to the regulations, by the Central treasury. The jagirdar thus was not the counterpart of the feudal lord of Mediaeval Europe.

Sometimes an entire province was conferred on a grandee as a jagir but that did not give the jagirdar the power to appoint the *Diwan*, the *Kazi* or even the *faujdar* of that province. He could not also change either the rates or the mode of collection of revenue assessment. At best, therefore, the jagir was a farming contract. In other departments of administration such as maintenance of law and order, the jagirdar had no authority. Several jagirdars were, in fact, posted on duties at great distances from their jagirs, indicating that except for the collection of revenue, the rest of the administration was conducted as in the Crown lands.[49]

VII

Akbar had, from the very start of his reign, set his face against the weaknesses in the military system prevailing then. He was determined to evolve a system under which he could have a compact military machine adequate to fight external aggression as well as to quell internal disorder.

The military system under the Lodis was weak and obsolete. The army, even in times of crisis, was a motley crowd of men collected and equipped by the Afghan chiefs for the occasion. Shershah made various attempts to put the army on a sound and central basis. He paid personal attention to enlistment, to settle the pay and rank of his men and to revive the Branding system and muster roll regulations which were first enacted during the days of Alla-u-din Khilji. The army under him fell into two divisions, the royal army maintained by himself and the contingents raised by his chiefs from their respective fiefs. But it was only his great personality that gave his army its strength. With his death the army again lost its compactness. His weak successors could not evoke that allegiance from the soldiers which he had been able to do.

The army with which Humayun effected his return to India was also composed of heterogeneous elements. Considerable rivalry prevailed between his Persian and Turkish chiefs and the Afghan element in his army was usually turbulent and undependable.

At the beginning of his reign, Akbar could not be certain of the fidelity of the army which he inherited from his father. To make clear that lethargy or insubordination even from the highest would not be toletrated, Bairam had ordered the execution of so influential an officer as Tardi Beg, who then enjoyed the position of the premier grandee of the realm. Akbar at that impressionable age could not have missed the lesson of that drastic step taken by his protector to maintain discipline in the army. As early as 1566 when Muzaffar Khan was the *Vazir*, a system was evolved under which each officer was required to maintain a fixed number of horsemen attached to him.[50]

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[49] P. Saran, Prov. Govt. of the Mughals, 81-82.

Akbar's army, as it evolved ultimately, consisted of three classes, the standing army paid from the treasury, the contingents maintained by and under the command of the Imperial officers and the contingents raised by the jagirdars from out of the revenues of the jagirs conferred on them.

Akbar did not, however, maintain a very large standing army. He depended mostly on the contingents raised by the Imperial officers whom he selected and appointed. Regulations were made from time to time, the object of which was first to ensure that these officers maintained the quota fixed for each of them and secondly to prevent fraud by failing to provide these contingents with horses and equipment.

After the conquest of Gujarat in 1573-1574, the first systematic step seems to have been taken in fixing the rank of these officers. The officers were classified into thirty-three grades ranging from *mansabdars* of ten to *mansabdars* of ten thousand.

These *mansabdars* formed the official nobility. Their appointment, promotion, reduction and dismissal depended on the absolute will of the King. The highest grade, ranging from seven to ten thousand, was generally reserved for the members of the royal family but in exceptional cases like Mansingh and Todermal, *mansabs* of even seven thousand were granted.

It was one thing to promulgate a set of regulations and another thing to see that they were fully implemented. Throughout the reign, constant complaints were received that the officers did not keep up the numbers required and were reluctant to spend for equipment and horses from the revenues allotted to them. Writing about the year 1573-1574 Badaoni observed: "In cases of emergency they (jagirdars) came themselves with some of their slaves and Mughal attendants to the scene of war, but of really useful soldiers there were none."

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[50] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, II, 403.

What was to be done then to prevent such frauds on Government? Regulations were made which provided for minute descriptive muster rolls. Even these failed and Shahbaz Khan, the *Mir Bakshi* at the time, had to revive the law called *Dagh-u-Mahall* which was first introduced by Alla-u-din Khilji and revived by Shershah.

> Explaining this law Badaoni says:—
> "It was settled that every Amir should commence as a commander of twenty (Bisti) and be ready with his followers to mount guard, carry messages etc. as had been ordered; and when according to the rule he had brought the horses of his twenty troopers to be branded, he was then to be made a commander of 100 (*cadi*) or of more. They were likewise to keep elephants, horses and camels in proportion to their command (*mansab*) according to the same rule. When they had brought to the muster their new contingent complete, they were to be promoted according to their merits and circumstances to the post of commander of 1000 (*Hazari*) or 2000 (*Du Hazari*) or even of 5000 (*Panj Hazari*) which is the highest command, but if they did not do well at the musters they were to be degraded."[51]

Even these precautionary rules did not prevent frauds, for the amirs "put most of their servants and mounted attendants into soldiers' clothes, brought them to the musters and performed everything according to their duties. But when they got to their jagirs they gave leave to their mounted attendants." "After inquiry it was found that they were all hired and that their very clothes and saddles were borrowed articles."[52]

The rules required that over and above the mustering in the roll of the troopers under an officer, each horse kept by a *mansabdar* or jagirdar had to be branded for its identification. This was necessary to prevent the same horse being shown more than once in the calculation of the fixed quota. Since this regulation called the Law of Branding meant that a defaulting officer would be reduced in rank and remuneration if discovered to be not maintaining the required strength of men or horses, its strict enforcement became a matter of acute controversy and even resentment. In 1575 Khan Azam, who was summoned to the Court from Gujarat where he was Governor, expressed his opinion strongly against this law. For that opposition he lost favour at the Court and was sent to Agra where he was kept under surveillance. Amongst those who opposed this law were such influential men as Shujaat Khan, Mahomed Abdullah and Kasim Khan.[53] The law in fact evoked such vehement protest that officers enforcing it had to incur great unpopularity and even to face hostility. It was indeed one of the principal reasons of the revolt in Bengal in 1580 which even threatened the very foundations of Akbar's empire.

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[51] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 193.
[52] Ibid, 193, 194.

Notwithstanding the several striking conquests that Akbar achieved, the army under him cannot by any means be called an efficient machine in the modern sense of the term. He was successful because he was a greater and more venturesome strategist than his contemporaries and his army was relatively more efficient than that of any of his opponents. Occasions were not lacking when dissensions broke out among his generals. One striking illustration is the hostility between Sadiq Khan and Shahbaz Khan when they were sent to quell the revolt in Bengal. In spite of messages from the Emperor himself to work in unison Shahbaz separated himself from his rival and went over to Bihar leaving Sadiq Khan alone in Bengal.[54]

At first Akbar had only one class of *mansabdars*. Later on, he introduced certain distinctions to distinguish their status. This was done by adding *Sawar* rank in addition to the *Zat* (personal) rank of a *mansabdar*. There is however a difference of opinion among the scholars as to the exact meaning of these two ranks. Blochmann holds that the *Zat* was the nominal number of horsemen a *mansabdar* was to keep.

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[53] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 208, 209.

[54] Ibid, 695.

The other view is that the *Sawar* rank was an indication of rank for which the *mansabdar* was given an extra remuneration but did not carry with it the obligation to maintain the number the horsemen indicated by it.[55]

The salaries of the *mansabdars* were annual and graded from Rs. 2500 to a commander of 500 to Rs. 30,000 to a commander of 5000. Out of these salaries the commanders had to bear the cost of maintenance of horses, elephants, etc.[56]

Besides the standing army raised by the Centre and paid by the Treasury there were other troops called "Supplementary" or *Dakhili* paid by the State but placed under the command of certain chosen *mansabdars*. There was also another body of troopers called the *Ahadis* under the command of a noble. They had their own *Bakshi*. Their salary was more than Rs. 500 but by a peculiar calculation they received salaries only for 9½ months in a year, [57] the balance being set off against the cost of horses and equipment given to them.[58] The *Ahadis* were the immediate servants of the Emperor. They were employed on a great variety of work and their duties were analogous to those of the modern aide-de-camp. Some of them were even appointed to positions of trust in the royal household.[59]

The artillery was managed as a household department and not as a branch of the army. The pay of a trooper in this department was between Rs. 3 and Rs. 7 a month. The infantry was a miscellaneous force which included matchlock men, whose salary ranged from Rs. 3 to Rs. 6 a month, wrestlers and gladiators, who were paid from Rs. 2 to Rs. 15 a month and slaves. Service in the cavalry was regarded as respectable but the other branches of the army except artillery were regarded almost as menial.[60]

There has been considerable controversy amongst historians as to the actual strength of Akbar's regular army.

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55. P. Saran, Prov. Govt. of the Mughals, 257-260, 263.
56. A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Blochmann, I, 231, 241.
57. Ibid, 249.
58. W. H. Moreland, India at the Death of Akbar, 73-75, 76.
59. Ibid, 73-75.
60. Ibid, 76.

Blochmann was of the opinion that a *mansabdar* of 5000 was not necessarily the head of 5000 horsemen. Such a *mansabdar* did not in practice maintain that number. In the *Padsahnama* of Shah Jehan, a commander of 5000 in rank is stated in fact to be in actual command of 3000 men only. According to him, the regular army of Akbar could not therefore be larger than 25,000. The Imperial stables under the immediate charge of Mirza Abur Rahim had only 12,000 horses, hence the standing cavalry could not be more than that number. Besides these, however, there were according to *Ain* (No. 6) 12,000 matchlock bearers and the *Ahadis* engaged in various offices at the Court and workshops and men who worked as couriers.[61] According to another view, Akbar's army could not have been less than 3,00,000 which would include both the royal army and the contingents attached to the *mansabdars*.

In the provinces, the army consisted of contingents which the governor and other officers had to maintain under their respective *mansabs*, contingents raised by the zamindars and the contingents maintained by each *Sarkar* according to its fixed quota.[62]

The proportion of contribution for cavalry of each province was fixed according to the martial character of the region. The quota of infantry was fixed on the basis of population. Ajmer had to contribute 86,500 horsemen. The figures mentioned in the *Ain* were really the number of men which the *Sarkars* and *Parganas* were expected to raise in times of crisis but they cannot be the figures of troopers actually maintained.

The standing army of Akbar, could not be as low as Blochmann believed. Fr. Monserrate, who accompanied Akbar in the Kabul expedition in 1581, states that the army that went with Akbar consisted of 45,000 cavalry equipped and paid from the treasury. Besides these, there were 5000 elephants and a host of infantry. It may be that such a large force was recruited for the special occasion but even then it indicates that the standing army at Akbar's disposal could not be as low as 25,000.[63]

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[61] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Blochmann, I, 242-246, 251.
[62] P. Saran, Prov. Govt. of the Mughals, 257, 260, 263.
[63] Banerjee & Hayland, Com. of Fr. Monserrate, 88-90.

The regular army was divided into twelve divisions. Each division mounted guard at the Royal Place for a month so that the Emperor had the opportunity of keeping an eye on each division by turn. The other divisions were kept at the frontiers or posted on special missions. They were kept under watch for their generals were expected to send from time to time reports about them to the Court.[64] It would seem therefore that in fixing the standing army at the figure of 25,000, Blochmann took only the number of cavalry kept at the capital and did not take into consideration the other divisions posted at the frontiers or engaged elsewhere.

Rules were made with meticulous care for the maintenance of horses, elephants, camels and mules. The royal horses were in charge of an officer called *Atbaji*. In 1595 Mirza Abdur Rahim held that post. Besides the *Atbaji*, there were a *Darogah*, an accountant and an inspector in charge of each stable of horses. To prevent fraudulent exchanges of horses, marks were branded on the horses to denote the value of each. Two select horses were always kept saddled at the entrance of the palace for any emergency.

Horses of Kutch breed were regarded as good as Arab horses. Camels were brought from Ajmer, Jodhpur, Nagor, Bikaner, Jesalmer and Batunda, the swiftest being from Ajmer. Cows from Gujarat were considered to be the best and a pair of them were often valued at one hundred *mohurs*. Akbar himselft once purchased a pair of such cows for Rs. 5000. Mules were generally imported from Iraq and were kept in groups of five.[65]

The elephants formed an important wing of the army. Hemu had already shown in the various battles he fought how invaluable this great animal could be for shock tactics. Being himself a lover of elephants, Akbar started for the first time their regular breeding. Detailed regulations were made for their upkeep and maintenance. Fines for cruelty or negligence towards them were fixed, sometimes even to the extent of the price of the elephant. Fond as he was of the elephants,

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64. A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Blochmann, I, 257.
65. Ibid, 137, 139, 140.

Akbar took great delight in taming the wild ones and having elephant fights in the royal park that he constructed for that purpose. He used to ride them by climbing on their tusks and his various exploits with *mast* elephants were often breath-taking.[66]

The Emperor took personal interest in the manufacture of canons and matchlock guns. The guns in his army were inferior only to thos of Trukey. Some of them were capable of discharging a ball of 12 *mans* in weight. Elephants and bullocks were used to transport them during military expeditions.

Akbar himself was responsible for several inventions and used to spend a great deal of his time in the workshops which he set up in the Palace grounds. He invented a gun which could be dismantled into pieces on the marches and then fitted up at the time of the battle. Seventeen guns could be so joined together so that they could be fired at a time with one match. He also invented a gun known as *Gajnal* so known because it was carried on the back of an elephant. Special types of guns were manufactured for naval battles and for siege purposes. The workshops under his personal care went on ceaselessly producing arms and ammunition.

Being himself an excellent marksman, Akbar took care to see that the guns, when manufactured, did not burst. Before the final processing was done, he used to try each one of them and then only they were passed. Chief among his gun-makers was Ustad Kabir.

There were 105 guns selected for his personal use. Statistics were maintained to show the game he killed with each of them. His favourite gun *Sangram*, with which he killed Jaimal at the siege of Chitor had been used by him to kill as many as 1019 animals.[67]

Separate *kazis* were appointed to try cases in respect of offences committed by the soldiers. Upto 1567 Kazi Tawais was the *kazi* for the army. From 1567-1577 Kazi Yakub

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66. Ibid, 119, 125, 131-132.
67. Ibid, 112, 116.

was the army *kazi* and thereafter Kasim Beg Tabrizi was appointed the *Mirdal* of the camp.[68]

VIII

According to the Quranic law, the sovereign was the commander of all true believers. He was, however, responsible to the general body of the faithful for the proper discharge of his duties. But there was no constitutional check on him. Though in theory it was always open to the theologians, the *Ulemas*, to issue a decree deposing a ruler if he was found to have violated the holy law and to proclaim him unfit to claim allegiance from his subjects, in practice the only means to enforce such a decree was by way of an open revolt.

The removal of a ruler necessitated the rise of some pretender with superior military strength. Except for this possibility, the Muslim State was essentially a military despotism and the ruler was both the head of the State and the Church. He played the dual role of the defender of the faith and the King of the faithful.

In theory, the sovereign was also the fountain-head of justice. He alone had the authority to dispense justice and decide cases. In practice he had to delegate some of his authority to his officers. These were the *Kazis* learned in the Islamic law. The Mughal judicial system was in essence based on this system. But the new problems that arose from the necessity of administering a vast empire in which the large majority of subjects were non-Muslims necessitated a great number of adjustments and compromises.

The Emperor was the highest and the supreme Judge. He held courts regularly on Wednesdays and tried some select cases which were considered to require his personal adjudication. In other cases, his Court was the final Court of appeal.

The Mughal Emperors attached great importance to this particular legal function and took special pride in being regarded as the dispensers of justice. Akbar spent not less than one and a half *pahar* a day in administering justice and hearing petitions directly from his subjects. The litigants came to the Court with petitions which they held up so that the officer in charge, the *Mir Arzi*, could see them. That officer then read them out. Akbar would interrogate the petitioner and pass orders on the spot. On Thursdays more important judicial work, both civil and criminal, was disposed of. The Emperor held his Court in Daulat-Khana--i-Khas. Even during tours and hunting expeditions, Akbar never failed to transact this work. Important criminal cases and especially complaints against corrupt or persecuting officers were always attended to by him.

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[68] P. Saran, Prov. Govt. of the Mughals, 350.

Besides the Emperor, the Chief *Sadr* and the Imperial *Diwan* divided between them the work of judicial administration. In the *Ain-i-Saryughal*, Abul Fazl observes that the *Sadr* was the head of the provincial *Kazis* but does not refer to a Chief *Kazi* showing that the Chief *Sadr* also performed the functions of the Chief *Kazi* as well.[69]

There was no written code prescribing either a system or rules as to procedure. Likewise there was no body of civil law. The courts therefore were guided by Hindu and Muslim laws, by customs and often by the personal views of the judges. Yet appeals were allowed to be preferred to superior tribunals and from those tribunals utlimately to the Emperor. The possibility of an appeal to the sovereign himself served as a check on the possible vagaries of those entrusted with the task of dispensing justice. Officials were above all anxious to avoid a scandal at the Court and the chance of a censure. But the value of this right of redress at the hands of the ruler was offset by the fact that a complainant could approach the royal Court only through a grandee or a courtier who nearly always had to be paid a bribe before he undertook to espouse a cause.[70] Revenue cases were tried by the *Kazi* in the *Sarkar* and the *pargana*. An appeal lay from his decision to the provincial *Diwan* and from him to the Imperial *Diwan*. The *Kazi* decided both civil and criminal cases and also questions of religious nature. In these cases an appeal lay before the provincial *Sadr* and a second appeal before the Chief *Sadr*.

In the *Sarkar*, the *Kotwal* had magisterial powers and it was he who tried criminal matters. The *Kazi*, on the other hand, tried civil cases involving questions as to succession and marriage and other questions of a civil nature. In the *pargana* the *shiqdar* tried criminal cases of a petty nature while the *Pargana kazi* tried civil cases. Every town had a *kazi* and a *pargana* was constituted into a judicial circle having a *Kazi*.[71]. An appeal could be laid from the decision of the *shiqdar* to the *kotwal* and from him to the governor and finally to the Emperor.

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[69] Ibid, 343-345.
[70] W. H. Moreland, India at the Death of Akbar, 34, 37.

The provision for appeals from one tribunal to another indicates that there was a systematic gradation of courts. That meant that a party aggrieved by the decision of a lower court could seek redress in a superior court.

The villages had their own *panchayats* existing from immemorial times. The elders of the village sat on those bodies and decided all disputes arising within their region. The trial before a *panchayat* meant no costs and decisions were given expeditiously. The *panchayats* dealt with all communal disputes, even questions as to land, marriage and indeed all classes of controversies. The decision was arrived at in an open meeting of the elders in a public place in the village and by the method of arbitration. Though the decision had no legal authority, sanction for enforcement of the decision was derived from the potent weapon of social ostracism.[72]

As in modern times there was a well-understood concept as to punishment. The object of punishment was reform and not retaliation. Akbar used to exhort his law officers to award penalty "with mildness and discernment."

Considerable caution was observed before awarding capital sentence. The provincial courts had no power to inflict death sentence except in cases of serious sedition. Cases requiring capital sentence were sent to the Emperor himself. Death sentences thus could only be imposed with the final confirmation of the Emperor. Even where Akbar himself passed such a sentence he had made a rule that it should be carried out only after he had passed that order three times.

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[71] P. Saran, Prov. Govt. of the Mughals, 353, 354, 357.

[72] Ibid, 360, 365.

Capital punishment was carried out usually by having the convicted person trampled under an elephant or by hanging or by impaling. Seduction and adultery were considered grave offences calling for extreme punishment. Officers guilty of such offences were either strangled or gibbeted. Jalal Khan, the Chief Trade Commissioner, was strangled for the offence of raping a Brahmin girl. Leather thongs were used for unnatural offences. Various types of instruments were kept for inflicting bodily punishment but not all of them were used. To cause terror to the delinquents, some of them were hung conspicuously on one of the gates of the Royal palace.[73]

The Emperor's ideal was to have an administration both impartial and benevolent. He was, therefore, particularly stern towards offences committed by his officers. The case of Haji Ibrahim Sirhindi is illustrative. He was suspended from his office as the *Sadr* of Gujarat when complaints against him for corruption reached the Court from the people of Ahmedabad. An inquiry was instituted and when convicted he was ordered to be locked up in the fort of Ranthambhor.[74]

In 1585 Akbar appointed a judicial committee, not unlike the modern Law Commissions, for suggesting means for the proper administration of justice, especially for expeditious disposal of cases and for improvement in the tone and practice of judicial administration. The committee consisted of Birbal, Hakim Hussain, Shamsher Khan Kotwal and Kasim Ali Khan. About the end of 1586 orders were issued which laid down that henceforth suits between Hindus should be tried by learned *pundits* and not by *Kazis*.[75]

There is thus ample contemporaneous evidence to show that even though there were no codified laws, there were fixed gradations of courts right from the *pargana* courts to the sovereign. Such a system served as an effective restraint against the arbitrary will of judicial officers. The subject was well assured that he had a right of redress in a superior tribunal even in revenue cases where the State was a party.

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[73] Banerjee & Hayland, Com. of Fr. Monserrate, 209, 211.
[74] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 322.
[75] Ibid, 205.

CHAPTER XVI

SOCIAL REFORMS

Amidst his multifarious activities, Akbar found time to direct his efforts towards reforming society, both Muslim and non-Muslim, trying to weed out evils wherever found. His stand for religious toleration did not make him lose sight of some of the evil practices amongst the Hindus. His assault on them was no less zealous than his attack on religious bigotry.

The very first regnal year heralded the abolition of all inland customs and taxes on professions and trades. This repeal swept away all artificial barriers and fostered consciousness of territorial oneness and unity. The year 1562 saw the passing of an order which did away with the military custom, prevailing since several centuries, of the enslavement and sale of the wives and relations of those vanquished in the wars.

Hunting near Mathura in 1563, Akbar noticed a tax being levied on the pilgrims who had gathered there. His sensitive mind at once reacted against the collection of an impost on those who had assembled there in search of the light of God. On inquiry, he was told by some of his close associates that it was the custom for Muslim rulers to impose such a tax. The tax was irksome for it implied political inferiority of the vast non-Muslim majority of the subjects. It was arbitrary too, for it was not a fixed impost but was determined according to the rank and wealth of each pilgrim. An order to stop such collection throughout the dominions was passed on the spot.[1]

Realising that the Empire he was building must rest on the solid foundation of the emotional attachment to his person of all classes of his subjects, Akbar took the momentous step in March 1564 of abolishing that most hated *jizya* impost.

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[1] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, II, 295.

The decree abolishing it evoked considerable opposition from some of the short-sighted and sectarian nobles of the Court and involved also considerable loss of revenue but Akbar stuck to it.[2]

From 1580 onwards came a spate of reforms in quick succession and touching almost every aspect of life. The orthodox were almost dazed; they found that the old world to which they had clung so far was being destroyed.

In 1581 when the Imperial camp reached Sirhind during the Kabul expedition, the Emperor passed a decree ordering a census of population to be taken. Jagirdars, Shiqdars and Daroghas in all provinces were ordered to record the number, of and the trade and occupation followed by the residents in their areas. They were to ascertain incomes and expenditures and to classify the good inhabitants from the bad in each village.[3] This was probably the first attempt at an official census, made by any ruler, a gigantic undertaking looking to the vastness of the area coupled with the lack of communications and other modern means. It is difficult, however, to ascertain how far and with what success the work was accomplished.

In the year 1582 a number of orders were passed touching various matters. One such order appointed a number of officers to regulate the transactions of sale and purchase of certain articles.[4] Another order provided for the celebration of the day of accession as an annual public festival. On March 11, 1582 came the announcement of liberation of all slaves in the realm. "How can it be right," said Akbar, "to call those seized by force by his name and to order them to serve?" He directed that henceforth they should be called "Chelas" (Disciples).[5]

Governors of the provinces were forbidden to inflict capital punishment without the sovereign's confirmation.

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[2] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 284.
[3] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 509.
[4] Ibid, 585.
[5] Ibid, 558.

Yet another order prohibited the hunting of small birds and all "creeping animals". As a practical example for others to follow, charities were instituted at the Palace. Officers were asked to donate to them once a week or month or at least annually. Another order provided for the construction of *sarais* throughout the Imperial territories. A still further order instructed the maintenance of a daily journal at the Court to record all notable events. Provision was also made for the appointment of impartial persons to fix prices of various commodities. An order was also passed to ensure public health by establishing public hospitals.

The evils resulting from early marriages prevalent amongst both Muslims and non-Muslims did not escape the keen eye of the sovereign. Marriage laws were passed prohibiting marriages before the age of 12.[6] Marriage with one's cousin or a near relation, though permitted in Muslim society, was also forbidden. A still later order prohibited marriages between boys and girls below the age of 16 and 14 respectively.[7] High dowries were disapproved. The Emperor maintained that consent of the bride and the bridegroom and permission of their parents were absolutely necessary for marriage contracts. A *tui beg* (Director of Marriages) was appointed, whose duty it was to inquire into the circumstances of the contracting parties. A tax was levied on both the parties to the marriage on a fixed scale varying with their status. A *mansabdar* paid the tax ranging from 10 *mohurs* to 4 Rupees, a middle-class man a rupee and the common people only a *dam*.[8]

The influence of the Jain teachers at the Court turned Akbar into a pronounced believer in vegetarianism. As early as February 1578, while on a hunting expedition in the Punjab, he declared his preference for abstinence from eating meat. "If the scarf of social life was not on my shoulders" he said, "I would restrain myself from eating flesh." He gave up hunting on Fridays although hunting was a favourite pastime since his childhood. He himself abstained from meat on Fridays and hoped that the practice of eating flesh would be confined to certain days.

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[6] Ibid, 559.
[7] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Blochmann, I, 193, 195, 200, 201.
[8] Ibid, 277, 278.

His thoughts strayed more and more towards this subject as time passed. "It is not right," he once observed" that a man should make his stomach the grave of animals." A conversation preserved by Abul Fazl records that a wise man was asked the reason of the long life of the vulture and the short existence of the hawk. The reply was "the one injures no animal and the other hunts them." "On this His Majesty remarked, 'if the penalty to a hawk that lives on animal life be a short span of existence, what shall happen to man, who notwithstanding abundant provision of other kinds does not restrain himself from meat ?' "

So strong were his feelings on this subject that he issued an order prohibiting association with butchers and fishermen and ordering those who engaged themselves in these occupations to be segregated.[9] A decree was also passed recommending that his subjects should refrain from eating meat on the day of his accession as thanksgiving to the Almighty in order that the year may pass in prosperity.

These orders, though recommendatory in nature, evoked resentment from those who found that the old world to which they were attached was fast vanishing under the reformative zeal of the Emperor. "At this time His Majesty," deplored Badaoni, "promulgated some of his new-fangled decrees. The killing of animals on the first day of the week was strictly prohibited, because the day is sacred to the sun; and during the first eighteen days of the month of Fawardin, the whole of the month of Aban (the month in which His Majesty was born) and on sacred days to please the Hindus."[10] "Reading and learning Arabic" he observed at another place, "was looked on as a crime, and Mahomedan Law and the exegesis of the Quran and the tradition and also those who studied them, were considered bad and deserving of disapproval. Astronomy, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, poetry, history and novels were elevated and thought necessary."[11]

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[9] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Jarett, III, 394, 395, 396.

[10] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 331.

Badaoni and others of his ilk well realised that study of these subjects, which they did not know, would be the death-knell to the monopoly in education which they had so far enjoyed. The orthodox school thought that Akbar widened the scope of the curriculum by introducing these secular subjects in order to destroy the study of Arabic literature. The stark fact was that they disliked the attempt to liberate education from the thraldom of religion. No doubt the Emperor was, by such decrees, extending the scope of studies and creating a liberal and catholic outlook amongst the younger generation. But it is wrong to suppose that Akbar was hostile to Arabic literature or to the continuance of its study. The Imperial Library itself contained a great many works in that language.

Akbar was himself to some extent responsible for the vehement criticism these reforms provoked. Like all autocrats, he was in a hurry to bring about a social reconstruction through legislation oblivious of the fact that legislation cannot by itself achieve such an objective. Decree after decree followed touching almost every aspect of life.

Besides widening the curriculum Akbar opened to non-Muslims the gates of educational institutions which had so far been exclusively reserved for the Muslims. For the first time Hindu and Muslim children sat side by side studying in the same schools and colleges.

Sialkot blossomed forth as a famous seat of learning where Maulvi Abdul Hakim was acclaimed as an eminent teacher. In Aurangzeb's reign, his son Maulvi Abdullah taught there attracting students from all parts of the country. In still later years, Sialkot became well-known for its *Mansinghi* paper as also for its silk paper.[12]

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[11] Ibid, 316.

[12] N. N. Law, Promotion of Learning in India during Mahomedan Rule, 189, 190.

Such was the fervour for education that Abul Fazl wrote enthusiastically: "All civilized nations have schools for the education of youths, but Hindustan is particularly famous for its seminaries." A big college was founded at Fathpur "on the hill, the like of which few travellers can name." A number of *Madresahs* flourished in Agra for which several teachers were brought from Shiraz, then a famous seat of Muslim learning. A *Madresah* was built by Sadiq Khan in Gujarat where Shaikh Wajihuddin Ahmed taught until his death in 1589. Abdul Haqq, the author of *Akhbarrul-Akhyar* studied in Delhi. The *Madresahs* built by Akbar and his nobles were supplemented by private schools where learned maulvis and pandits taught. Badaoni for instance studied in one such private school under Mihr Ali Beg.[13]

The Emperor took considerable pains to see that a comprehensive and liberal education was imparted to his sons by well-qualified tutors. Qutbuddin Khan and Mirza Abdur Rahim, both known for their wide outlook, were amongst the teachers of Salim. Shaikh Faizi and Sharif Khan were the teachers of Murad. Monserrate taught the Christian doctrine to Murad. Sayyid Khan Chaghtai taught Danial. Abul Fazl, assisted by a brahmin pandit, was entrusted with the task of giving tuitions to Akbar's grandsons.

Female education was not neglected. There was already a long established custom among Muslims to send their girls to schools. Sultan Ghiyasuddin of Malwa (1469-1500) had in his seraglio school mistresses to impart education to the female members of the royal household. In the Mughal period, liberal education was imparted to a number of princesses. Princess Gul Badan wrote the famous *Humayun-namah* as contribution to Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama*. She had her own library in the harem where she used to collect famous works.[14] Salima Sultana was also a learned lady who wrote a number of poems in Persian under the nom-de-plume of *Makhfi*. Maham Anaga was also well-educated and she founded a college at Delhi. In the palace at Fathpur, Akbar had set apart rooms where the ladies at Court were educated. Nur Jehan and Mumtazmahal were well-versed in Persian and the latter wrote a number of poems in Persian. Similarly Jahanara Begum, the eldest daughter of Shah Jahan, encouraged learned men in her father's Court. Zebunnisa Begum, the eldest daughter of Aurangzeb was likewise known for her patronage of learning.

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[13] Ell & Daw. The History of India as told by its own Historians Vol. V. 493.

[14] Mrs. A. S. Beveridge, Gulbadan's Humayunnamah, 76.

Concrete measures were taken not only to foster literature but to make the indigenous classical works known to those who did not know Sanskrit. In 1582, *Mahabharat* was translated into Persian under the editorship of Naqib Khan, the reader of Akbar. Several Hindu scholars were invited to write annotations. Akbar himself spent several nights explaining their meaning to his reader. Abul Fazl wrote the preface and when the translation was ready, the text was embellished with beautiful paintings. In 1589 Badaoni was ordered to translate the other great epic, *Ramayana*, which he completed after four years' labour. Similarly *Atharvaveda* was rendered into Persian by Haji Ibrahim Sirhindi, *Lilavati* by Faizi, the *Tajak*, a treatise on astronomy, by Mukammal Khan Gujarati, and *Panchtantra* by Husaini Waiz. Abul Fazl translated the Gospel. These and other literary men were particularly active during the time when Akbar had his headquarters at Lahore.

Besides the patronage to literary men, Akbar took personal care in the collection of works on a variety of subjects. These works were kept in the Imperial Library and were classified under various heads. Mulla Pir Mahomed was at one time Akbar's librarian. When Gujarat was conquered, a vast collection of books maintained by Itimad Khan was added to the Imperial Library. Faizi had as many as 4,600 volumes in his library. These too were added to the Imperial Library when the poet died. In the Agra Fort a long room was specially fitted up to house this vast and growing library.

From the very outset of his reign, Akbar encouraged painting. The Palace maintained a gallery of paintings selected by the Emperor. Every week the *Daroghas* presented paintings drawn by artists. Akbar rewarded the painters, whose works he liked, by presents or increase in their salaries. Khwaja Abdus Samad was the chief amongst them. To him goes the credit for establishing what has come to be known as the Mughal school of painting, a blending of the indigenous with the Persian style. Among the better known painters at the Court were Mir Sayyid Ali of Tabriz who illustrated the story of *Amir Hamzah*, Daswanth, the son of a *palki*-bearer and a pupil of the great Abdus Samad, Basawan, excellent in portraits and a number of others. Akbar himself gave sittings for his portraits. An album of the portraits of the chief officers was also kept in the Royal Library.[15]

Music reached a high level of excellence during this period. Musicians were invited from all parts, Hindus, Persians, Turanians and Kashmiris. They were divided into seven classes, one class for each day in the week. Tansen, a Hindu convert to Islam, whose tomb at Gwalior is still a place of pilgrimage for musicians, was the most celebrated of them all. Abul Fazl speaks of him as "a singer the like of him has not been in India for the last thousand years." Originally in the service of Raja Ramchand, Tansen's fame reached the ears of Akbar. In the seventh year of his reign Akbar sent Jalaludin Qureshi to Bhattah to induce Tansen to come to Agra. Ramchand, powerless against the Imperial summons, had to send his favourite reluctantly to Agra. At the very first sitting, the musician showed such mastery over his art that the Emperor, overwhelmed by the grace and the sweetness of his voice presented him two lacs of rupees. Though there were a number of other musicians at the court, it was Tansen who was mainly responsible for the great strides that Indian music and composition made during this period. When he died in April 1589, Akbar paid homage to the great master by ordering all his musicians to accompany his mortal remains to the grave accompanied by unbroken music. Akbar himself proclaimed that the death of Tansen meant the annihilation of melody.[16]

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[15] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Blochmann, I, 107, 108.

[16] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 816.

Sultan Mahomed Adli was yet another celebrated musician considered so skilled in the art of music and dancing that Tansen himself acknowledged to being his pupil. Baz Bahadur, whom Abul Fazl testified as a singer without rival,[17] acquired his knowledge of music from Adli. Baba Ramdas of Lucknow was another brilliant star at the Court considered next only to Tansen. In the worst days of his life Bairam, while flying to the Punjab, rewarded him with a lac of *tankas* for rendering one song before him.

In the domain of music as in painting, Hindus and Muslims borrowed from each other, each enriching the art of the other. Indian music presents during this period a chapter of close cooperation between the two communities. *Khyal*, an invention of Sultan Husain Sharqi of Jaunpur, has now become an important limb of Hindu music, while *drupad* has grafted itself on Muslim music. The great progress in this art was possible because "his majesty has such a knowledge of the science of music as trained musicians do not possess and he is likewise an excellent hand in performing especially on the *naggarah*."[18]

A question has often been raised whether so profound a patron of learning and art and so great a lover of literary works could be unlettered as some historians have maintained. Monserrate believed that Akbar could neither read nor write but "he is very curious and has always men of letters about him, whom he gets to discuss on sundry topics and tell him various stories." Jerome Xavier too wrote that "the King is gifted with a wonderful memory, so that, although he can neither read nor write, he knows whatever he has heard learned men discoursing about or whatever has been read to him." Even modern historians like Beveridge think that Akbar was illiterate.

Against this opinion, however, there is the testimony of Abul Fazl, who was always close to the Emperor, that the Emperor wrote daily with his own pen in numerals the number of pages read to him by his readers and to whom he paid accordingly. Besides, so learned a man as Humayun would not have been so careless about his own son's education as to leave him unlettered. As early as 1547 Maulana Azamuddin had been appointed as his tutor to be succeeded by other tutors, Bayazid, Mir Abdul Latif, Pir Mahomed and Haji Mahomed Khan. The dismissal of several tutors shows that both Humayun and, later on, Bairam Khan paid attention to the education of Akbar. Even assuming that Akbar was inattentive to his studies and spent most of his youth in sports, it is inconceivable that he could have escaped at least the mastery of the alphabet during all the years between 1547 and 1555. It is equally inconceivable that in the family of Mughals where practically every member before and after Akbar was endowed with literary gifts including ladies such as Gulbadan and even Maham Anaga, Akbar could have remained completely unlettered and with the unique memory that he had, could not have remembered the alphabet which must have been repeated to him on numberless occasions by a series of teachers. Besides writing in numerals the pages that were daily read to him, Abul Fazl also mentions that the King took great interest in different systems of writing prevalent at the time. Calligraphy was considered a fine art and was given close attention. Several modes of writing were then in vogue, the chief being the *Nastaliq*. A list of penmen maintained at the Court is to be found in *Ain*. There is evidence that literate or not, Akbar could compose poetry, recite the odes of Hafiz and take pleasure in the recitation of the fables of India.[19]

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[17] Badaoni, Tr. Ranking, I, 557.
[18] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Blochmann, I, 51.

If Akbar was totally illiterate as is sometimes presumed, it is impossible that he could be conversant with the different styles of writing including the pictorial and ornamental styles. But there is the direct evidence of Abul Fazl that Akbar used to sign some of the more important *Sanads*. Though Jahangir observed in his memoirs that his father was unlettered (*Ummi*), he himself wrote on the front page of the *Zafarnamah*, a work treasured by the Mughals, testifying to the signature of Akbar on that page. There are references to the specimens of Akbar's handwriting in the manuscripts preserved in the India Office Library, London and the Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta.[20]

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[19] N. N. Law, Promotion of learning in India during Mahomedan Period, 139.

While feverish activity was going on in literary and educational matters, the necessity for reforms in other branches of life was not forgotten. In 1586-1587 an order was passed prohibiting second marriage unless the first one had proved barren. This was followed by another order which provided that widows wishing to remarry should not be forbidden. A third one forbade a Hindu woman who had not consummated marriage from becoming a *Sati*.[21] Akbar took strong exception to a woman being forcibly made a *Sati*. Instructions, therefore, were given to all the *Kotwals* that they "should not suffer a woman to be burnt against her inclination." He had, however, great regard for the voluntary sacrifice that a Hindu woman suffered on the death of her husband. A voluntary *Sati* was therefore permissible. In the debates in the *Ibadat Khana* Akbar often used to tell the Christian Fathers that since Christianity practised monogamy there was nothing extraordinary in their respect for women. But the practice of the *Sati* among the Hindus was extraordinary in view of the Hindus having numerous wives, many of whom spent their lives neglected and unappreciated and yet these women became the "flaming torches of love and fellowship" whenever the day of calamity came.[22]

Jaimal, the son of Rupsi and a cousin of Raja Bhagwandas, was married to the daughter of Mota Raja. In 1583 he was sent to Bengal on a mission. In his zeal to fulfil his mission in the shortest possible time, he rode so hard that he died prematurely near Chausa. His widow was unwilling to become a *Sati* but her step-son Udaisingh and other relations pressed her to follow the prevalent custom. The woman at last agreed to the insistent demands of her husband's relations. News reached the Emperor that Jaimal's widow was being sent to a forcible death. Though intimately connected with Bhagwandas and Rupsi, Akbar decided to intervene, knowing that his interference would not be appreciated by the two nobles. He rushed to the spot just at the nick of time and had those who were forcing the widow arrested.[23]

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[20] Makhanlal Roy Choudhary, Akbar was literate, in Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. 22, No. 1. 81.

[21] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 367.

[22] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 371-372.

A similar story is narrated about yet another woman who nearly sacrificed herself in following this awesome custom of *Sati*. The daughter of Rai Raisingh was wedded to Birbhadra, the son of Raja Ramchand of Pannah. When Ramchand died, Akbar sent his son to Pannah to ascend the throne. When nearing his capital, Birbhadra fell down from the palanquin and died. His widow at once declared her desire to be *Sati* but Akbar intervened and persuaded her not to throw away her life as she had children of tender age who needed her maternal care.[24]

On the question of inter-communal marriages, Akbar held strong views. In 1590-1591 he issued a decree that if a Hindu woman fell in love with a Muslim and changed her religion to marry him, she should be taken away from him and returned to her family. Badaoni, who criticised this decree, did not mention its counterpart which provided that a Muslim girl who fell in love with a Hindu should likewise be prevented from embracing Hindu religion.[25]

The Emperor had not much faith in the custom of circumcision. He, therefore, forbade circumcision in the case of boys below the age of twelve. Even circumcision for boys above twelve was permissible provided their wishes had been first ascertained.[24]

The evil of intoxicant drinks was clearly recognised. Realising, however, the impracticability of total prohibition, Akbar made a compromise by controlling their use. Wine was permitted only to those for whom the doctors certified it as necessary. Excessive drinking, carousals and disorderly behaviour were made punishable. To keep the evil under control, Akbar had a wine shop set up near the Royal Palace under the charge of the porter's wife and had the tariff fixed. Persons, who wished to purchase intoxicants, could do so, only after their names were recorded by a clerk appointed for the purpose.[27] This reform seems to have been limited to the capital and the evil of drink went on unrestricted in the other parts of the Empire.

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[23] Ibid, 594, 596.
[24] Ibid, 985.
[25] A. F. Ain-i-Akbari, Tr. Blochmann, I, 210.
[26] Badaoni, Tr. Lowe, II, 388.

An effort seems to have been made towards checking the evil of prostitution in the capital. A number of women of easy virtue had swarmed in Fathpur "as to defy counting or numbering." The Emperor had them segregated outside the city in quarters known as *Saitanpurah*. Akbar appointed a keeper in this locality who allowed men to enter the locality only after they had given him their names.[28]

The problem of beggary also engaged Akbar's attention. In order that this class of population did not constitute a nuisance to the general public, the Emperor set up dormitaries called *Khairpura* for the Muslims, *Dharampura* for the Hindus and *Jogipura* for the Jogis where free food was served to them at the cost of the State.[29]

By all accounts, gambling had assumed great proportions especially among the nobility and had been a cause of strife and ruin amongst them. Indeed it had become so widely prevalent that it was impossible to supress it. In spite of the Islamic injunction to the contrary, Akbar was forced to recognise it. He tried to bring it under control by setting up a state bank which gave loans to the players and levied fixed charges on the game.[30]

In 1584 a new era with a solar system was introduced calling it the *Ilahi* year. There was nothing anti-Islamic about it; yet, critics like Badaoni were not wanting to denounce it. *Hijri* era was, however, retained and the *Hijri* dates continued to be used in all State and public records. *Ilahi* era was found so convenient that it was continued by

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[27] Ibid, 311.
[28] Ibid, 311.
[29] Ibid, 334.
[30] Ibid, 349.

Akbar's successors and even by so puritanic a ruler as Aurangzeb. The *Ilahi* era was based on calculations made by such eminent scholars as Amir Fath-ullah Shirazi and the *farman* announcing it was composed by Abul Fazl.[31] The Emperor attempted to change the Hindu era also.

Impatient with the existing evils that had crept into society, both Muslim and non-Muslim, and realising that the only sanction behind them was tradition, Akbar tried to accelerate the pace of reform by decrees after decrees. Such a large number of regulations were promulgated touching almost all facets of life and in such rapid succession that the reactionaries felt to their annoyance that the world of theocratic monopoly was giving way to a new world of modernism. The measures that Akbar introduced remind one of the modern system of excise rules, the Sharda Act and other marriage laws, the Municipal control of problems such as prostitution, beggary and the early attempts made by the British administrators to prevent the custom of *Sati*. In his attempt to rejuvenate society as in his policy of religious toleration, the Emperor was far ahead of his contemporaries, both here as well as in Europe.

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31. A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, II, 17, 18.

CHAPTER XVII

SHADES OF EVENTIDE

The Deccan campaign brought the great fort of Asir within the Imperial dominions, but it could not have given much gratification to Akbar. The means by which it had been captured did not redound to his glory but cast a cloud on his reputation as the invincible captain of war. But there were worse blows, blows to his heart, to come in the eventide of Akbar's life.

The Emperor had enjoyed, as no other ruler had, nearly four decades of consistent success. He had now reached a stage in life when his early companions who had served him with unstinted devotion and fidelity and had given their best, were leaving him one by one.

Raja Bhagwandas and Raja Todermal had died in November 1589 leaving a void which could hardly be filled. In August 1593 Shaikh Mubarak, who had been a pillar of strength to Akbar in all his innovations in the field of religion, passed away. In 1596 Shaikh Faizi, upon whom Akbar had fondly bestowed the title of Poet Laureate, left this mortal world. The Shaikh had suffered prolonged illness. When the last moments came, the Emperor went in the middle of the night to the death-bed of his friend and guide. Taking the head of the dying poet on his lap and caressing it, Akbar, cried out: "O Shaikhji, I have brought Hakim Ali with me. Why do you not say anything?" But the poet was past speech and was already breathing his last. When Akbar realised that his friend had only a few moments to live, he threw his royal turban on the ground casting aside all dignity, and, uttering a few words of solace to Abul Fazl, he left the Shaikh's death-bed and returned to his apartments. These were blows of separation hard for the aging Emperor to bear; harder than these were yet in store for him, blows which were to strike at his innermost self.

Of his three sons, the Emperor had been fortunate in none. When the prophecy of Shaikh Salim Christi had come true and Salim was born, the exultant father had, with great joy, built a new great city. Yet these very sons were to cause him the greatest agony.

Both Murad and Danial had turned out inveterate drunkards. Salim, the heir-apparent too, was equally addicted to drink, but he had also tired of waiting to ascend his father's throne. With the iron constitution that his father had, he had felt that the Emperor would live indefinitely. As early as 1591, when Akbar had an attack of colic, Badaoni testifies that there was a rumour in Court circles that his eldest son had given him poison. "Baba Shaikh Ji," the Emperor is said to have exclaimed at the time, "since all this Sultanate will devolve on thee, why hast thou made this attack on me?"[1]

Whether there was any truth in this rumour or not, Salim had begun to feel that his father was showing preference for Murad. Salim had even engaged spies to watch his younger brother.[2] It is not unlikely that Murad himself secretly hoped to supersede Salim and secure the throne for himself. His relations with Mirza Abdur Rahim, who was in charge of the Deccan campaign at that time, were marked by jealousy and hostility. It was no wonder that the expedition there was not proceeding satisfactorily. The Emperor had ultimately to supersede both of them and take over the command himself. Apart from being actively engaged in schemes to supersede Salim, Murad was nothing but a "drunken scamp" full of insolent pride and difficult to work with.

When Akbar was in Agra, having left Lahore late in 1598, preparing to go to the Deccan, he received the news of the death of his second son. It was in May 1599 that Murad died in a town in the Deccan of *delirium tremens* caused by excessive drink. His death must have no doubt caused grief to Akbar but, so far as the dynasty was concerned, it was a blessing in disguise for if he had survived his father, he would in all probability have gathered some influential men around him and made a bid for the throne.

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1. Badaoni, II, Tr. Lowe, 390.
2. Ibid, 390.

In July 1599 Akbar started for the Deccan keeping Salim in charge of Agra and the province of Ajmer. Before leaving for the South, Akbar gave instructions to Salim to complete the subjugation of Amarsingh of Mewar but Salim had other things in his mind and refused to carry out the royal command.

By the year 1600 Salim had become so impatient and restless as to throw all prudence to the winds. Shahbaz Khan, who alone had any restraining influence on him and who had been appointed as his Counsellor in the Government of Ajmer, died in that year.

Instead of proceeding against Amarsingh, the Prince spent his time mostly in bouts of drink and in undesirable company. Amarsingh, taking advantage of Akbar's absence in the Deccan and his deputy's lethargy, came out defiantly and plundered such far off places as Malpur and other towns.

Thoughts of seizing the throne even by force had already entered the mind of Salim; he did not care how grievously such action would hurt his father's feelings. At first, his idea was to proceed to the Punjab.

Raja Mansingh was at this time in Ajmer. Not liking the climate of Bengal, the Raja had gone there leaving the administration of that province to his deputies. In his absence the Afghans under Usman Khan rose in revolt and even secured the greater part of Bengal. Mansingh, the one man who could have stopped the nefarious plan of Salim, was obliged to leave Ajmer to take the field in person. Acting with his characteristic vigour the Raja put down decisively and for ever the Afghan trouble. But before going to the east, even Mansingh, with a view to engage the attention of Salim in other matters, had advised the Prince to march against Mewar. But then Salim did not wish for obvious reasons to be far away from the capital. To make a show, the Prince crossed the Jumna, but stationed himself only four *kos* away from Agra.

Akbar's mother, the aged Mariam Makani, held Salim in great affection. With all her adoration for him even she realised the wicked designs of her grandson. To prevent him from any rash act, she followed Salim at some distance to counsel patience. But, no sooner the Prince heard of her coming, he avoided her and rushed away to Allahabad.

There being none strong enough to check him, Salim had even thought of seizing Agra and capturing the vast treasury there. Qulij Khan, the governor of the capital, was too trustworthy an officer and Salim was compelled to abandon his design.

There was no one at Allahabad to thwart him. His very first act after arrival there was to seize the Bihar treasury which amounted to nearly 30 lacs of Rupees, confiscate the jagirs granted by Akbar and bestow them on his advisers, Kutubuddin Kokaltash, Allah Beg and others and assume the title of King. This was nothing short of open rebellion against his father, but Salim was in no mood at this time to pause to think of the recklessness of his actions.

Akbar heard the alarming news of the rebellion of his eldest son. Winding up the campaign in the Deccan, he hurried back to Agra. But his son had already gone beyond all limits of decency. Even the return of Akbar had no chastening effect on him. With the money that he had looted from the Bihar treasury, the Prince raised additional troops and marched towards Agra with a cavalry of 30,000.

When Akbar received the news of his son's march, he sent him a *farman* saying that "he should recognise that his peace and prosperity lay in returning to Allahabad. If a desire for service had seized his collar, he should come to Court unattended." The order was couched in restrained and moderate language, assuring the Prince pardon, notwithstanding the extreme acts of which he had been guilty. But even the moderation of the command failed to bring the Prince to his senses.

Instead of returning to Court, Salim turned back to Allahabad from Itawa where he had marched. From there he sent a letter to his father alleging that certain people at the Court had poisoned the Emperor's ears against him and professing that the affection between them was like that of Jacob and Joseph. The truth was that Salim was really afraid of his father. Akbar was still desirous of reconciliation. He sent a peace feeler conferring Bengal upon the rebellious Prince asking him to proceed there and take charge of that province from Mansingh. But Salim took no notice of this offer and sulked at Allahabad.[3]

The early part of the year 1602 was spent in negotiations, Salim being represented by his envoy, Dost Mahomed of Kabul, better known in history by his later title of Khwaja Jahan. These talks, however, failed as they were bound to, for Salim made impossible demands. The Prince insisted that he should be allowed to enter Agra with 70,000 of his men, that the grants made by him to his followers should be confirmed and that his adherents should not be treated as rebels. These demands were rejected and the Prince renewed his claim to the throne at Allahabad, struck gold and copper coins in his name and, to exacerbate the feelings of Akbar, impudently sent some of them as specimens to the Court.

This last act of insolence infuriated the Emperor and goaded him to action. In utter despair, he turned to Abul Fazl, now the only person surviving from amongst his early advisers. Akbar gave a full account of the misdeeds of Salim and summoned Abul Fazl at once to the Court. This was in June or July 1602. Abul Fazl was then in charge of the Imperial interests in the Deccan. He advised strong action, assuring the King that he would bring the Prince bound to Court; and he set out on his journey to the capital.

Salim, who attributed the estrangement between him and his father to Abul Fazl, sensed the danger to himself if he allowed Abul Fazl to meet his father. Surrounded by desperate advisers who knew their fate if the Prince failed, Salim decided on their counsel to intercept Abul Fazl and even to do away with him. The Prince sent for Bir Singh, the Bundel chief of Orchha, to whom he entrusted the task.

Abul Fazl was warned of possible treachery by Asad Beg, one of the trusted men in his retinue but in his hurry to return to his royal patron, he heeded him not and advanced towards Agra with an inadequate guard. At Sarai, a few miles from Narwar, the Minister was once again warned by a mendicant but destiny was leading him to his end. He again paid no heed and proceeded further with his small retinue.

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[3] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 1210-1211.

Early in the morning of August 12, 1602 when he was about to start the day's march between Sarai and Antri, Abul Fazl and his retinue were suddenly waylaid by Bir Singh and his 500 horsemen. Abul Fazl could offer no resistance against such a large force. Some one from Bir Singh's men struck him with a lance and his head was cut off. Bir Singh sent the severed head to Salim at Allahabad as testimony of the fulfilment of his assignment. The Prince received the head of the murdered minister with unconcealed glee and had it thrown away insultingly into an unworthy place.

Salim felt no remorse or repentance for this premeditated murder of his father's dearest friend and companion. With an unabashed indifference to decency, he even attributed divine grace to the success of his dastardly act and recorded at a later date in his *Memoirs* his own confessions of the crime and the reward that he bestowed on Bir Singh:

> "I promoted," he wrote, "Raja Bir Singh Deo, a Bundela Rajput, who had obtained my favour, and who excels his equals and relatives in valour, personal goodness and simple-heartedness, to the rank of 3000. The reason for his advancement and for the regard shown to him was that near the end of my revered father's time, Shaikh Abul Fazl, who excelled the Shaikhzadas of Hindustan in wisdom and learning, had adorned himself outwardly with the jewel of sincerity, and sold it to my father at a heavy price. He had been summoned from the Deccan, and, since his feelings towards me were not honest, he both publicly and privately spoke against me. At this period, when, through strife-exciting intriguers, the august feelings of my royal father were entirely embittered against me, it was certain that if he obtained the honour of waiting on him (Akbar) it would be the cause of more confusion and would preclude me from the favour of union with him (my father). It became necessary to prevent him from coming to Court.
>
> As Bir Singh Deo's country was exactly on the route and he was then a rebel, I sent him a message that,

> if he would stop the sedition-monger and kill him, he would receive every kindness from me. By God's grace, when Shaikh Abul Fazl was passing through Bir Singh Deo's country, the Raja blocked his road and after a little contest scattered his men and killed him. He sent his head to me in Allahabad. Although this event was a cause of anger in the mind of the late King, in the end it enabled me to proceed without disturbance of mind to kiss the threshold of my father's palace and by degrees the resentment of the King was cleared away."[4]

It is little short of blasphemy for Salim to invoke God's grace for such a heinous offence. The callous insincerity of the writer is evident when he characterises the Emperor in this very passage as his "revered father".

When the news of his friend's murder reached Akbar, he went into a terrible rage. Such was his grief that he even abstained for three days from making his appearance in the *Jharokha*, an unusual omission on his part.[5] Orders were issued at once to hunt out the assassin and to slay him wherever he was found. But Bir Singh managed to elude his pursuers, though at one time he came so near to being caught that he even received an injury and just succeeded in escaping through the Gwalior territory. As late as 1604 Akbar sent Raj Rajan on an expedition against Bir Singh but except for Akbar and Shaikh Faizi, the son of the victim, none was serious enough by that time to undertake the task and court the displeasure of the heir-apparent.

Even the Emperor himself was in two minds. Bitter and unhappy, he thought at one time of marching against Salim. The next minute he turned away from such thoughts for that would mean an open civil war. Taking advantage of his hesitation some of the more influential inmates of the royal harem became busy bringing about rapproachment between the father and the son. Sultana Salima Begum, widow of Bairam Khan, whom Akbar had married in his youth, wielded considerable influence if not in State affairs at least in the personal affairs of the King. Equally influential were Akbar's aged mother, Mariam Makani, and his aunt Gulbadan Begum. The three ladies resolved to bring about reconciliation and to avert an open feud. At last they succeeded in inducing the Emperor to pardon Salim. Not to lose the advantage, Salima Begum personally journeyed to Allahabad taking with her an elephant, a special horse and a robe of honour to convince the erring Prince of the pardon she had secured for him.

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[4] Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Tr. Rogers & Beveridge, I, 24-25.

[5] Ibn Hasan, The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire, 86. There were only five such occasions when Akbar failed to make public appearance: (1) Fall from an elephant in the 34th year; (2) Attack by a *hur* in the 41st year; (3) On the death of Birbal in the 30th year; (4) Murder of Abul Fazl; (5) Illness before death.

In the early part of 1603, Salim was persuaded to send a petition that he was returning to the Court. Mariam Makani who had assured personal safety to Salim went a stage to receive him. The next day Salim made his entry in Agra escorted by these two ladies. A meeting was soon arranged between the father and the son. Akbar received the Prince with all outward courtesy even advancing a few steps to embrace him. On his part Salim presented to his father as proof of his submission 12,000 gold mohurs and 770 elephants out of which the Emperor accepted 354. Akbar in his turn presented a valuable elephant "Pun" and to remove all apprehensions from his son's mind, took his own turban and placed it on the Prince's head as an overt sign that he recognised Salim as his successor.

But the reconciliation staged so *ostentatiously* was neither complete nor sincere. The murder of his dearest friend was too fresh in the mind of Akbar. The blood of Abul Fazl stood between the father and the son making fraternal relations between the two impossible.

On February 7, 1603, Gulbadan Begum, who had worked so assiduously to avert open hostility between the father and son, died. Born in 1523, two years before Babur set out on his conquest of India, she was 82 when she died. Throughout the latter part of her life, she had been a steadying influence in the harem and an adviser in whom Akbar reposed implicit confidence. She had witnessed three generations and had shared in the fortunes of each of them. She spent her childhood under Babur's rule in Kabul and Agra, her girlhood and young wifehood under Humayun, and her maturity and failing years under the protection of her nephew Akbar. The *Humayun-Nama* she wrote at Akbar's instance for Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama* "has few, if any compeers, inasmuch as it is the work of a Mussalmani and lights up her woman's world."[6] The history that she wrote is without any pose or guile, spontaneous and unaffected and contains domestic details throwing light on the private lives of all the characters of whom she wrote.

Salim had, after the apparent reconciliation with his father, withdrawn to Fathpur Sikri. Akbar, who must have known that his son still entertained rebellious designs, desired that his energies should be diverted to other things. He therefore asked Salim to devote himself in earnest to the destruction of Rana Amarsingh who carried on resistance against the Mughals with unabating spirit. The pleasure-loving Prince abhorred warfare in Rajputana hills where so many eminent Mughal generals had failed and where there was the likelihood of humiliating, disaster. Possibly Salim also felt that this was Akbar's way of keeping him away from Agra and Allahabad. Apparently acquiescing in the order, he advanced about ten *kos* from Agra but soon withdrew to Fathpur and began complaining against the inadequacy of the force and equipment given to him for the expedition. He asked for increased forces and supplies which he knew would be declined and thus avoided the difficult task entrusted to him. The atmosphere was still surcharged with intrigue and suspicion. Both the father and son suspected that one would poison the other. In the autumn of 1603, while Salim was at Fathpur, already a deserted city, Fr. Xavier who visited the Prince found him engaged in the strange occupation of extracting copper from peacocks' tails as an antidote against poison.[7]

From Fathpur, Salim asked for leave to return to Allahabad. Finding that it would serve no useful purpose to refuse it, Akbar granted it. On November 10, 1603 Salim crossed the Jumna near Mathura and returned to Allahabad.

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[6] Gulbadan Begum, Humayun-Nama, Tr. Mrs. A. S. Beveridge, 3.

[7] Maclagan, The Jesuits and the Great Mogul, 63.

Away from parental vigilance, Salim gave himself up to excessive use of opium and intoxicants and under their influence, he betrayed the inherent cruelty of his nature. For light offences which a normal master would overlook, he inflicted barbarous punishments. He had his recorder flayed alive in his presence and ordered castration of a woman servant, a *Khavasan*, with whom that recorder had fallen in love.

About the middle of 1604 his first wife, the daughter of Raja Bhagwandas and the mother of Prince Khusrau, committed suicide by taking an overdoze of opium. The reason for this suicide is shrouded in mystery. One view is that it was occasioned by improper behaviour of Salim towards her.[8] Salim's own explanation as recorded by him in his *Memoirs* threw the blame on his son Khusrau.

> "His (Khusrau's) mother", he wrote, "while I was prince, in grief at his ways and behaviour and the misconduct of her brother Madho Singh killed herself by swallowing opium. What shall I write of her excellences and goodness? She had perfect intelligence and her devotion to me was such that she would have sacrificed a thousand sons and brothers for one hair of mine. She constantly wrote to Khusrau and urged him to be sincere and affectionate to me. When she saw that it was of no use and that it was unknown how far he would be led away, she, from her indignation and high spirit which are inherent in the Rajput character, determined upon death. Her mind was several times disturbed, for such feelings were hereditary and her ancestors and her brothers had occasionally showed signs of madness, but after a time recovered. At a time when I had gone hunting on Zi-l-hijja 26th, 1013 (May 6, 1605) she in her agitation swallowed a quantity of opium and quickly passed away. It was as if she had foreseen the behaviour of her unworthy son."[9]

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[8] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 1242.

[9] Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Tr. Rogers & Beveridge, I, 55-56. Though Jahangir puts the date of the incident as 6th May 1605, the Akbarnama dates it as 1012 A.H. (1604) A.D.

It is indeed the height of irony that Salim should expect filial affection from his son when he himself had thrown to the winds all regard for his own father and whose end he was so passionately hoping for every moment.

Akbar was deeply shocked when he learnt of the antics of his eldest son. All his pent-up resentment and anger against the Prince which he had so far suppressed at last burst out like a storm. Sultana Salima and Gulbadan Begum, the two pacifying influences in the Palace, were no longer there to calm his ruffled heart. He decided to march to Allahabad and to chastise his son if he did not mend his ways.

The capital was thick with rumours that Akbar was seriously thinking of superseding Salim's claims to succession in favour of his grandson Khusrau. Salim had sufficiently exasperated the Emperor, even to snap the filial bonds between them. There were besides important people at the Court who had been alienated against Salim by his intemperate habits and tyrannical temperament to espouse the cause of Khusrau. It is beyond doubt that Aziz Koka, and Raja Mansing were keen to see that Salim's claims should be discarded and Khusrau placed on the throne instead. The one was the father of the only wife of Khusrau and the other the brother by adoption of Khusrau's mother. It is not without significance that Mansingh after his return to Agra from Bengal had been raised by Akbar to the exalted rank of a *Mansab* of 7000 reserved upto that time for the members of the royal family. Besides, Khusrau, as the English traveller Terry remarks, was "a gentleman of very lovely presence and fine carriage, so exceedingly beloved of the common people."

Akbar was bent upon bringing Salim to complete submission by force if necessary. He collected for that purpose a contingent on the other side of the Jumna and actually started on his expedition on August 11, 1604. Salim, on the other hand, had heard that his father was giving support to Khusrau's claim and realised his fate if once he was subdued. He therefore prepared to defend his person, his claim to the throne and his liberty. It was now certain that the issue between the father and the son would be determined by force of arms. There appeared to be no other way out except a bloody civil war.

But there was one person, the 77 year-old mother of the Emperor, who was anxious to avert the disaster. Hamida Banu who held Salim in great affection knew that, if the quarrel between her son and her grandson reached the stage of an armed conflict, her grandson would have no chance of escaping certain defeat and ruin. She used every possible argument to dissuade Akbar from marching against the Prince. But Akbar was adamant. Her intervention having failed, the old lady felt frustrated and fell seriously ill.

On learning this news, Akbar at once repaired to Agra to attend on her bedside. But by the time he arrived, Hamida Banu had already lost her power of speech and was hovering between life and death. Five days later, on the 29th August,[10] she expired. Her body was sent to Delhi and laid at rest by the side of Humayun.

The bereavement brought home to Akbar the futility of fighting his only surviving son. Miran Sadr Jahan, his envoy at Allahabad, who fortunately enjoyed the confidence of Salim, was mainly responsible for dissuading both the father and the son from the ruinous clash. Jahangir himself has recorded of having known him since his childhood when he was reading his 'Forty sayings' with Shaikh Abdunnabi. "From these early days till now Miran Sadr Jahan has acted towards me with single-minded loyalty, and I regard him as my preceptor on religious matters. Whilst I was prince and before my revered father's illness and during that time, when the ministers (pillars of the State) and the high nobles had agitated and each had conceived some idea of gain for himself and wished to become the originator of some act which could only bring ruin to the State, he had not failed in the activity of his service and devotedness."[11]

Miran Sadr Jahan was successful in inducing the Prince to submit. Arrangements were at once made for Salim to come to pay condolences to his bereaved parent for the death of Hamida Banu. In October 1604 the Prince, escorted by his troops came towards Agra. Leaving his troops discreetly at some distance from the city and accompanied only by his second son Parviz and a few of his principal adherents, he made his entry in Agra on November 9, 1604.

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[10] Smith, Akbar the Great Mogul, 317; A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 1244.

[11] Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangir, Tr. Rogers & Beveridge, I, 22.

Akbar also had decided to act cordially and received his son publicly in a verandah of the Palace with apparent affection. Yet, when the father and son faced each other, the anger and resentment which had been simmering all these years burst out in an uncontrollable rage. All the injuries and indignities inflicted on him by this son stood before him in vivid clarity. When Salim prostrated before him, Akbar seized him by his hand as if to raise him and took him into an inner apartment.

Finding himself alone with Salim, after so many years, Akbar could no longer restrain the longing to chastise him. Seizing the astonished Salim he showered on his face a number of slaps in quick succession hurling at the same time bitter reproaches for his past wicked behaviour and unfilial conduct. Not content with the corporeal punishment, he ordered the Prince to be kept in close custody of Raja Salivahan and two servants, Rup, a *Khawas*, and Arjun, a barber and deprived Salim of his usual dose of opium and wine.[12] The principal adherents of the Prince, who had accompanied him to the capital, were arrested and put in chains. The only person to escape was Raja Basu of Mau, near Kangra, a rebel against Akbar, who had received timely warning and had succeeded in getting away.[13] Ten days, anxious days for Salim, thus passed, not knowing what his ultimate fate would be. Akbar, still the indulgent parent, yielded at last to the entreaties of his wives, pardoned the Prince and allotted to him a residence suitable to his rank. The towering presence of the Emperor had completely crushed any vestiges of the rebel in his son. Salim was completely mastered. Henceforth he gave no trouble to his father and continued to live in the palace assigned to him, in humility.

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[12] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 1244.
[13] Smith, Akbar the Great Mogul, 319.

Notwithstanding all his rage, Akbar had bowed to realities. He had realised that he had no other alternative except to pardon Salim, his only surviving son now, Danial having died at Burhanpur in April 1604, sometime before the submission and arrest of Salim. Danial too had been given to excessive drinking and his body had at last succumbed to the evil effects. Danial had been a handsome man, fond of horses, elephants and guns and had acquired an aptitude for composing verses in Hindi. Akbar had endeavoured his best to reclaim him, had sent several *farmans* of reproaches to him and even appointed men to see that no intoxicants reached him. But Danial was too deeply addicted to the vice to care for these *farmans* or advice. The men sent to him were soon bribed and corrupted and even when all available channels to obtain his favourite liquid failed, these men supplied wine in barrels of muskets and even in phials concealed in their turbans. Even Mirza Abur Rahim, whose daughter Danial had married, was at his wits' end to restrain his son-in-law.

Danial came by his death in a somewhat singular way. He had a favourite gun which he had named as "*Yaka u Janaza*," "the same as the bier." He had himself composed a couplet which he had engraved on it:

> "From the joy of the chase with thee,
> life is fresh and new;
> To everyone whom the dart strikes,
> it is the same as his bier."

Writing of his death, Jahangir records:—"When his drinking of wine was carried to excess and the circumstance was reported to my father, *farmans* of reproach were sent to the Khan Khanan. Of course he forbade it and placed cautious people to look after him properly. When the road to bring wine was completele closed, he began to weep and to importune some of his servants and said: 'Let them bring me wine in any possible way.' He said to Murshid Quli Khan, a musketeer in his immediate service: 'Pour some wine into this *Yaka-u-Janaza* and bring it to me.' That wretch, in hope of favour, undertook to do this and poured double-distilled spirit into the gun, which had long been nourished on gunpowder and the scent thereof and brought it. The rust of the iron was dissolved by the strength of the spirit and mingled with it and the prince no sooner drank it than he fell down."[14] Danial had remained ill for forty days and at last his body, already destroyed by strong and poisonous spirits, gave way.[15]

After this blow, Akbar had no other recourse than to turn to Salim. Henceforth he seems to have gone all out to promote complete reconciliation with Salim. In March 1605 he even took the risk of going in a barge unescorted to the residence of Salim without informing anyone and was with the Prince for nearly a *pahar*. Shortly after this meeting, Akbar issued an order that the Dewans should administer the State affairs in accordance with the wishes of the Prince and his seal should be affixed to all the grants of *mansab*.

The reconciliation between the father and the son was now full and unreserved. Though Salim was formally entrusted with the government of the Western Provinces so far held by Danial, he continued to live at Agra. There is no reference to the large army of 70,000 horsemen which Salim had left behind when he came to Agra. Presumably these forces were left to themselves and dispersed on their own, Salim not thinking it worthwhile to retain them any more.

But though the entente between the Emperor and his heir-apparent had been made, the feud had lasted for nearly four years from 1600 to November 1604. During these years the wanton cruelty and extravagant and intemperate life of Salim at Allahabad had made many scars on the allegiance of some of the courtiers who had begun to favour the succession of Khusrau. Such influential men like Raja Mansingh and Aziz Koka had been canvassing for support to the cause of Khusrau and were active in their campaign to set aside Salim's claim. The Palace was rife with intrigue.

These worries and the premature deaths of his two sons at last broke the iron constitution of the Empeor. The first signs appeared on the 21st of September when Akbar was laid up with an attack of dysentery. Nonetheless, he continued to give '*darshan*' at the *jharokah*. No one thought that the attack would prove fatal. Even Hakim Ali, the Royal physician of high repute, did not think it necessary to give any medicine, trusting to nature and the strong constitution of the Emperor. An unfortunate quarrel between Salim's servants and those of Khusrau at an elephant fight however, accentuated the Emperor's illness and from that day he was confined to bed.

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[14] Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Tr. Rogers & Beveridge, I, 35.
[15] A. F. Akbarnama, Tr. Beveridge, III, 1254.

It soon became known that the Emperor's illness was serious. Both Khan Azam and Mansingh decided now to take matters in their hands. On the day that Salim was coming to see his ill father, probably the day after the elephant fight, they resolved to seize the Prince by force. Salim's barge had reached the landing at the Fort tower. He was about to step on the shore when one of his retinue warned him of the plot. Salim sensed the danger and at once went back to the barge and thence to the safety of his palace. The plot failed.

But the failure of the plot did not stop the two nobles from trying other means. Khan Azam and Mansing called a meeting of the nobles and tried to win them over to their side. But the Chagatai tradition that the eldest son should succeed was deeply ingrained in the nobles and the proposal in favour of Khusrau was stoutly resisted. Besides, the proposal was likely to result in a civil war and none was willing to brave such a responsibility. The meeting broke up without coming to any definite conclusion. The uncertainty of the situation however was brought to an end by Raja Ram Das, a Kachhwaha himself, who posted his own faithful followers over the treasury to hold it in the interests of Salim. Shaikh Farid, known in later years as Murtaza Khan, also rallied round him the Saiyyads of Barha who declared for Salim.

Safe in his palace, protected by his retinue, Salim did not dare to come to the royal palace to visit his dying father. Torn by intense anxiety about his own fate, he spent whole nights wandering about restlessly. He had supporters but they would not declare themselves in his favour until they exacted from him two solemn oaths as price for their allegiance. One was to defend Islam and the other was to refrain from wreaking his revenge on those who had supported the cause of his son. Salim gladly gave both and honoured them. After his accession Mansingh had failed for obvious reasons to come and pay the customary respects. The Raja had to be summoned six or seven times and then only he came. Of that occasion Jahangir writes:—

> "He (Mansingh) also, like Khan Azam, is one of the hypocrites and old wolves of this State. What they have done to me and what has happened to them from me, God, the knower of secrets knows; possibly no one could mention such other case.......As he was one of those who had been favoured by my father, I did hot parade his offences before his face but with royal condescension promoted him."[16]

Whatever his personal feelings against these two nobles, Salim kept them to himself. As for Raja Ram Das, one of the first acts of Salim as the Emperor was to reward him with promotion from the rank of 2000 to that of 3000.[17]

Agra was agog with the news that the King was dying. The Emperor was no longer able to sit in the *jharokha* and to give the customary '*darshan*'. On Saturday October 22, Fr. Xavier and his colleagues presented themselves at the Palace to administer the last consolations of their religion to Akbar thinking that he was in his last moments. "The Fathers" wrote Xavier, "who had full information of the King's sickness, went on Saturday to see him in the hope that he would hear the words which, after long thought and having commended the matter to God, they had prepared for this hour. But they found him amongst his captains, and in so cheerful and merry a mood, that they deemed the time unsuitable for speaking to him of the end of this life, and decided to await another opportunity. They came away fully persuaded that he was making good progress and that rumour, as ordinarily happens when Kings are sick, had exaggerated the seriousness of his malady."[18] On Monday the 24th, his condition took a serious turn. The Fathers went again to the Palace but they could not gain entrance to the chamber where the King was lying in critical condition. They were obliged to come away as they could not find anyone who would announce their arrival.

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16. Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Tr. Rogers & Beveridge, I, 138.
17. Ibid, 21.
18. Letter of Fr. Xavier dated September 26, 1606 in Maclagan, The Jesuits and the Great Mogul, 64.

Salim, now assured of the support of the majority of the nobles, ventured to go to the Palace and his father's presence. Though not in a position to speak Akbar was still conscious and was in full possession of his faculties. Salim prostrated before him. The dying Emperor showed by a sign that he should put on the royal turban and the Imperial sword of Humayun which always hung at the foot of the royal bed. Salim did as he was told and thereupon Akbar made another sign directing the Prince to leave the apartment and show himself outside to the crowd which had assembled in the courtyard anxiously waiting for news. When Salim went out, the crowd received him with warm applause. He felt fully assured at last of the crown for which he had fretted so long.

As usual on such occasions, there were plenty of rumours in the capital that the King's illness was caused by some poison administered to him in some mysterious form. Even Fr. Xavier believed them and mentioned them in his letter. The allegation that Salim or someone on his behalf had done it gained credence from the fact that the Prince had ardently desired his father's death.

Current was another rumour that Akbar poisoned himself inadvertently. His object, it was said, was to kill either Raja Mansingh or Ghazi Beg, the Chief of Tatta in Sind, by means of a poisoned confectionary kept ready for his victim but which he took through mistake. The allegation deserves to be rejected as both unbelievable and baseless.[19]

Doubts have been expressed by some whether Akbar professed himself in his last moments a true Muslim or not. The French traveller, Pyrard de Laval, writing a few years later, wrote that Akbar gave hopes that he would become a Christian provided he was permitted to keep all his wives and that he died pending this question. The Jesuits themselves gave out varying versions, some maintaining that he died a Muslim and others that he died a Hindu. Xavier writing in 1615 alleged that he "died neither as a Moor nor as a Christian, but in the Gentile sect which he had embraced." Botelho, who spent several years at Agra and Bijapur, wrote in the year 1670 that it was commonly believed in Bijapur that Akbar died a Christian. But he himself narrates that the Adilshahi Sultan of Bijapur once asked him if it was true that the Emperor died a Christian and his reply was "Sire, I would to God it had been so, but he kept us deluded with such hopes and died in your sect of Muhammad."

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[19] Smith, Akbar the Great Mogul, 326.

There is no doubt that in spite of all the frantic efforts of the Jesuits for his conversion Akbar never entertained the slightest thought of changing his forefathers' faith. His genuine interest to know the tenets of all the prevailing religions and his insatiable curiosity to fathom the ultimate Truth made them think that he had renounced the Muslim faith. Akbar was first and foremost a realist. He must have realised that any change of religion on his part would provoke violent resistance to his kingdom and might even over-throw his dynasty. The testimony of Sir Thomas Roe written from Ajmer in 1616 that he died "in the formal profession of his sect"[20] is both true and consistent with all recorded facts.

Though on the 22nd of October he had rallied round, Akbar's iron constitution began to give way. For four days he fought against death. The end came at last in the early hours of Thursday, October 27, when only a few and trusted friends were near him. The obsequies were, as appeared to the Jesuits, hurried and of the simplest character devoid of any pomp or grandeur to which they were accustomed. They did not understand that according to the customs prevailing amongst the Sunnis, the blessed spirit should at once be released from the human fetters and hastened to ultimate peace. A gap was pierced in the wall of Agra Fort which the dead Emperor had himself built. Through this aperture the body was borne on the shoulders of Salim, now Emperor Jahangir. The few and closest friends, who had remained constantly at the death-bed of the King, formed themselves into a small procession and followed the dead King tȯ the sepulchre at Sikandra, three miles away where Akbar had already constructed a mausoleum for himself. The curtain was thus rung down on a long and glorious reign. An era had come to an end.

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[20] Maclagan, The Jesuits and the Great Mogul, 64–65.

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